

Then as now, the question “are you married?” wasn’t always simple to answer. For one reason or another, obvious couples didn’t always agree on their status.

Married women tended to be 5–10 years younger than married men, and there was a sizeable population of single male adults. Only 39% of the men were married.

On Gabriola today, 55% of men are married, 68% if you include common-law relationships. The BC averages are similar: 54% for legal marriages and 62% including common-law relationships.

**Adults by country of birth:**

North America		women only
BC	43 (38%)	19 (54%)
Canada	8 (7%)	4 (11%)
USA	<u>5 (4%)</u>	<u>2 (6%)</u>
	56 (49%)	25 (71%)
Europe		
England	20 (18%)	5 (14%)
Scotland	11 (10%)	3 (9%)
Ireland	<u>5 (4%)</u>	<u>0 (0%)</u>
	36 (32%)	8 (23%)
Sweden	3 (3%)	1 (3%)
Denmark	1 (1%)	0 (0%)
Netherlands	1 (1%)	1 (3%)
Norway	1 (1%)	0 (0%)
Portugal	<u>1 (1%)</u>	<u>0 (0%)</u>
	7 (7%)	2 (6%)
Asia		
Japan	11 (10%)	0 (0%)
China	<u>2 (2%)</u>	<u>0 (0%)</u>
	13 (12%)	0 (0%)

Immigration has diminished. In 1901, half the population wasn’t born in North America. In 2006, only 24% of the population were immigrants.

**Ethnicity:**

(white, red, or yellow race in 1901):

European	85	(51%)
Native*	67	(41%)
Asian	<u>13</u>	<u>(8%)</u>
	165	(100%)

\* the census counted children of mixed marriages as “red”.

What’s interesting is that in 1901, 41% of Gabriola’s population were either Native or of Native parentage. Nowadays, less than 4% are in that category.

Immigrants to Gabriola from Europe and Asia were predominately male, but female immigrants now out-number male immigrants 7 to 5. In 2006, visible minorities, if that descriptor means anything anymore, were Latin American (1.2%), Black (0.7%), Asian (0.7%), and Arab (0.2%); only 3% in all compared to 25% for the rest of BC.

Although not counted in 1901, I’d venture that hardly anyone aged 35–64 had had a university education. Now 32% have. The BC average is 23%. ◇

**Fish and babbling brooks—by Nick Doe**

So far as I know there aren’t any freshwater fish on Gabriola other than sticklebacks, and it’s questionable as to whether there ever were,<sup>3</sup> but I came across an old surface-water usage report recently that says that at one time, two of the creeks on Gabriola had, or were stocked with trout.

Of Goodhue Creek, which flows into and out (southeast) of the Commons Land, the report says: “Goodhue Creek inlet channel to Hoggan Lake is a spawning bed for Rainbow Trout.”

<sup>3</sup> Tim Brown, who was born on the island, recalls fishing in Castell Brook as a boy.

Of Mallett Creek, which flows in a westerly direction into Descanso Bay, it says, “Mallett Creek maintains a stocked population of Cutthroat fish.”

Many of the old names of creeks and wetlands are falling out of use. In addition to the two above, the report mentions

Brooks: Castell, Degnen Bay, Dick, Ike (I. MacKay), Jacqueline (J. Sears), Martin, Pam

Creeks: Eppler, Francesco, Hoggan, Jenkins, McLay

(McClay), McCormack, Stoney (*formerly* Rock), South Road

Springs: Chapple (Chapel), Claude (C. Campbell), Darling, Easthom, Farrow, Fiddlehead, Harold, Lobo (Loraine & Bob Weir), Lucas, McCall, Pam, Rowson, Vicki (V. Larson), Wagg, Windecker

Swamps: Eppler, Ingeberg, McCormack, McGuffies, and Toadeye.

There was also on old maps Dicks Swamp and Dutchmans Swamp (Eppler Swamp, also known as Epps Pond). The little book, *Gabriola Island Place Names* by Aula Bell and Neil Aitken adds Atkinson Swamp and Descanso Creek.

This long list of names is a testament to how important water was to the settler farmers. Francesco Creek (Brook), which flows in a northeasterly direction into Clark Bay from Harold Spring, was probably used by Spanish naval officers Galiano and Valdés to re-supply their ships, *Sutil* and *Mexicana*, with freshwater in 1792. ◇



Mussels invading the clam bed at the southeast entrance to False Narrows. There were so many, the bed looked like a black oil slick from a distance. Photo taken in May 2008.

## Mussel invasion at False Narrows—by Nick Doe

A startling sight a couple of summers back (2008) for those of us who walk the beach at False Narrows was how black the clam beds had become. Oh no! Massive oil pollution perhaps? Surely not yet another effect of climate change? But no and no. It was an invasion of mussels—probably the Bay Mussel *Mytilus trossulus* (the native one) but easily mistaken for the Blue Mussel *Mytilus edulis* (from the Atlantic). Even the mussels are sometimes confused; they produce hybrids. Both are however edible and cultured commercially.

Brian Kingzett at the Centre for Shellfish Research, Vancouver Island University, kindly sent this reassuring note in response to my query.

What you are seeing is not that unusual; it may be unusual for this site in this year only.