

RESEARCH NOTES

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HIST*3480 (03): Peter Goddard

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GENERAL HISTORY OF THE OR:

A Glimpse at the History of the Guelph Correctional Centre by Diane Doherty:

- “Planning for an industrial Farm began in 1906 and was part of a provincial prison reform initiative under the government of Sir James Whitney. The reform idea was spearheaded by the Honorable W.I. Hanna” (Doherty, 1).
- “800 acres of farmland to the east of Guelph on York Road was purchased in 1909 and construction began the following year” (Doherty, 1).
- “The Industrial Farm at Guelph was the first of its kind in Ontario and was quickly followed by other facilities. Guelph was the most important development in corrections in Ontario since the first facility was built and it was meant to be the flagship of a new system of reform” (Doherty, 2).
- “The Industrial Farm at Guelph, Ontario held its official opening on September 25th, 1911. During construction from 275 to 300 inmates were employed in building operations, farming, the dairy and development of the property” (Doherty, 2).
- “The design and use of the Guelph facility as an industrial farm is characteristic of the shift made in the late 19th century away from programs of punishment or punishment with religious penitence. Farms and other meaningful work were seen as a more positive way to reform the criminal and served the dual purpose of making them work to repay society as well as learn a trade or skill that could be of later use in the community” (Doherty, 2).

The House on the Hill by Karl Grottenthaler:

- “In his [Hanna] position as Provincial Secretary he was responsible for the administration of public charities, prisons, public health, child welfare, liquor regulation, and statistics. These departments all had some influence on the social problems afflicting the Province, and it was therefore a perfect set-up to implement the far reaching changes in the social services of the province of Ontario” (Grottenthaler, 4).

TRANSITION TO THE G.C.C:

Wellington County History Journal:

- “There was always an emphasis on agriculture and the trades at the Reformatory, as it was considered that these skills would help men find work when they were discharged. Work gangs, consisting of up to one hundred inmates from trustworthy members of the general population, were formed to maintain the gardens, farm and beef plant. Due to the size of the property in the early years, most of the guards were on horseback and armed with rifles. This practice continued until the 1970s. In 1972, the Ontario Reformatory discontinued the farm and became the Guelph Correctional Centre.” (Williams, 65-66)

SPOKE Newspaper, February 21st, 1983:

- “Frank Dobias, recreational advisor, has been with GCC since 1957 and has a staff of eight recreationalists. The versatility of his staff allow for a wide variety of activities” (Hamilton, 5).

Frank Dobias and John Valeriotte Interview (conducted by YGH):

- When Frank applied to work there, the recreation department wasn't very large (they had a gymnasium and a sports field). They had all physical activities including baseball, football, and soccer. (Frank, 7:14 - 8:30)
- In the 1960s, they moved a massive hanger to the property from an Air Force base from WWII which became the main gym (4 courts). In the 1970s this was a “state of the art facility” compared to any high school in the city. (Frank, 8:30 – 10:31)
- Things changed to 8 hours of sleep, 8 hours of work/school and 8 hours of leisure (which looked different from person to person). The whole concept was to expose the prisoners to socially acceptable activities. They didn't want them to back out into the world to participate in the same anti-social activities that got them in there. (Frank, 18:06 – 19:48)

The House on the Hill by Karl Grottenthaler:

- “Building on the great success of this public exhibition, Mr. Sanderson reached out to the community, especially service clubs, churches, and other public minded groups, to join the volunteer activities at the institution. He also actively supported increased staff training at the Staff Training School located on the Reformatory property, which was designed to provide special courses, seminars and conferences for training at all levels within the Department of Corrections” (Grottenthaler, 15).

- “After 30 years of service in penal institutions, the last 13 years as Superintendent of the Guelph Reformatory, Charles Sanderson retired, leaving the institution a much different place than when he started” (Grottenthaler, 15).
- “The important significance of Recreation now takes its place, along with Education, Work and Health as one of the essential factors in every individual’s development adding enrichment and creativity to his life. Therefore, for an individual confined to a correctional institution, Recreation could and should play a vital part in his life and thus later to the society he will enter. There are many satisfactions (creativity, sense of service, emotional release) that are accrue to the individual through participation in recreational activities” (Grottenthaler, 20).
- “To sum up the benefits of the recreational program at Guelph C.C., Recreation assumes freedom; freedom assumes choice, and choice assumes that the individual has a wide range of experience, gathered from such fields as crafts, music, drama, literature, and sports and games. These are all available to the inmate who chooses to participate in these activities” (Grottenthaler, 21).
- “For several years, there had been a push by the Provincial Government to change from a rigid penal system to a more liberal one, consistent with the spirit of the times. In 1972, the changes were being introduced in correctional institutions, causing controversies and concerns among correctional officers and others about a lack of control. However, the die was cast and the changes were coming” (Grottenthaler, 27).
- “It started innocently enough at a management seminar at a nearby motel, where a cross section of our institutional staff was held captive to hear the latest thinking on reformatory reform, and how we could help to bring it all about. I was quite pleased that Mr. John Lee, the Superintendent, had invited me to join this group. I found that my previous work experience enabled me to make a worthwhile contribution to this endeavour. Flip charts, power point presentations, and even closed circuit television were employed to get us with ‘the Plan’” (Grottenthaler, 27).
- “The Plan was basically to eliminate the military style hierarchy and replace it with a system more suitable for the new type of inmate population being assigned to the Guelph institution” (Grottenthaler, 27).

THE ART PROGRAM:

Wellington County History Journal

➤ How the Program started:

- “A simple Christmas card design competition for prison inmates sparked the establishment of the Prison Arts Foundation in 1969 and its subsequent nationwide programmes for all correctional institutions in Canada. In May 1972, the Prison Arts Foundation was incorporated as a registered charitable organization to promote creative activity programmes in prisons, to recognize the value of such programmes in the rehabilitative process, and to develop the talents and skills of inmates” (Williams, 72).
- “One of the last mounted guards was Frank Dobias, who was the manager when Arend Nieuwland was first hired, in September 1975. Arend had just graduated with a BA in Fine Arts from the University of Guelph and was offered the part-time job as Art Director of the Prison Arts Programme at the Guelph Correctional Centre” (Williams, 66).

➤ How the program was run:

- “A couple of years prior to Arend’s arrival at the Correctional Centre a new Recreation Centre had been built, so the space allotted to him was the old recreation area, including the stage. It provided several rooms for a potter’s wheel, a large general arts area for painting, clay and soapstone carving, a leather working area, and Arend’s office, in which many of the students sat and chatted whilst carving or making wagons. Some simply came to be in a quiet space” (Williams, 68).
- “Prior to Arend’s arrival, the operation of the studio was more of a craft centre and so there was little interest on the part of inmates” (Williams, 66).

- “The students were free to work in any medium within the budget, and if they had a special request and could pay for the materials, Arend would shop for them. He was very enthusiastic about the prospects of the curriculum he planned, as it would be an ‘open studio.’ Inmates could visit for one of the three daily sessions, depending on their status in the facility” (Williams, 68)
- “As mentioned earlier, the programme was unstructured and open-ended so as many as twenty-five men often turned up for the hourly sessions” (Williams, 70).
- The environment that Arend created:
 - “His philosophy of teaching was his own; he made sure that the student did not feel frustrated with the process and was free to work at his own pace, but if students felt a need for assistance, they could ask for help. He wanted them to think and feel, with a sense of soul-searching, to touch, manipulate and analyze the texture in different directions. Many came to the art department having never painted or drawn before in their lives, and they often just wanted to sit and watch others, enjoying the quietness of the room” (Williams, 68).
 - “With the increase in numbers, Arend needed volunteers who shared his artistic insights and who would concentrate on their own work as an example to the inmate students. I had contacted Arend asking if he could teach me clay sculpting. He agreed, if I was willing to become a volunteer in the art department of the Correctional Centre. This was the beginning of a four-year insight into the place of artistic expression within the penal system, an opportunity sent to me as a gift. There were several others; we worked together in that room” (Williams, 68).

- “Arend insisted on being referred by his name rather than ‘Boss’ and the students were addressed by their first names. As a volunteer I was addressed by my name, and I was always impressed with the politeness of the men” (Williams, 69).
- “Arend claimed he created this form of address between students and outsiders as it gave them a feeling of total emotional freedom and a sense of trust. When you consider that, over a period of twenty-six years, he had only one minor incident in the art room—no guards were permitted—I feel he was absolutely right” (Williams, 69).

The House on the Hill by Karl Grottenthaler:

- “The prevailing social conditions in the native communities resulted in a disproportional number of young native people being incarcerated in provincial institutions, making it almost a right of passage without the normal stigma attached to having a criminal record. They tended to support each other more strongly than other inmates regardless of what tribe they were from” (Grottenthaler, 24).
- “Consequently, they formed their own support group, the “Native Sons”, who were assigned a room in the assembly hall basement for their exclusive use” (Grottenthaler, 24).

Guelph University News Bulletin, Volume 21 no. 34:

This has information on Richard Bedwash who is a former inmate. I unfortunately did not have enough space in my essay to include it, but this is a really great source on him

- “Born on the Long Lac Reserve in 1936, Richard grew up with the rich Ojibway heritage” (UofG News Bulletin, 1977).

- “Richard studied art with Norval Morrisseau, a life-long friend and father of the contemporary Ojibway artistic movement. Most of the paintings on display depict the soul spirits of the animals in the Ojibway legends” (UofG News Bulletin, 1977).
- “A prolific artist, Richard has about 800 paintings to his credit, 240 of them created during a recent term in the Guelph Correctional Centre” (UofG News Bulletin, 1977).
- “He entered two works in the Prison Arts show, one of which won the Prison Arts '77 award” (UofG News Bulletin, 1977).

THE IMPACT OF ART ON REHABILITATION:

Transcription of Interview with Arend Nieuwland (conducted through email):

Emma Rutledge: From what you witnessed as the art director of the G.C.C., in what ways do you feel that allowing space for creative expression is beneficial to the rehabilitation of inmates?

Arend Nieuwland: I believe that open space in itself expresses freedom and without security guards amongst the inmates releases anxiety. In contrast to the restraint of prison discipline revives desirable orientation towards life. More important is the inner space of self awareness. A feeling of satisfaction, personal uniqueness, and pride to build self worth which begin to replace perceptions of worthlessness. Producing something meaningful from their own inner self. Such as freedom of expression, whether it's right or wrong can be solved in a positive force when analyzed in constructive ways! I project to my students a strong belief that a bad thing can be a positive force in a prospective objective. In all bad things there is good. It is the underlying need which must be understood. I believe ART is an international language, like laughing, crying, loving, feelings we all share in respect to understanding. Through it we communicate and

acknowledge who we really are. There are no short answers, it's a process of insight where all problems can be solvable.

Emma Rutledge: Is there a particular memory that stands out to you, where you saw a shift in an inmate's demeanor due to their involvement in the program?

Arend Nieuwland: By giving the inmates a certain freedom with space of no constraints is the first step. By asking them what they would like to experience through various options of mediums in expressing themselves through art. Then by teaching them a certain process in how to express themselves creatively, thereby serving, as a result, to build awareness of self-esteem, which is the main effort behind the courses. What I found rewarding was an inmate coming out of his shell and becoming interested in what he was doing! A sign of insight that gave him an understanding of himself. He became more open, happy, and interesting in how he felt towards his creativity. I showed the students a process of free form painting. Due to government cuts we used recycled cotton bed sheets instead of canvas. I applied a paint-splattering technique onto the cloth using only three different colours to keep it simple; then letting the paint bleed. We let it dry until the next day. We stretched the painting to view its content. A cosmos of colour, unidentifiable of what it could represent. No one understood what they saw or what I was trying to explain to them. Next I told them to just stare unto it for an hour or two. They felt like I was wasting their time. So I explained the reasoning behind it, to let their brains absorb it until it's saturated the contents and then let it rest until the next day. When the students came to view the painting they started to see images popping into their minds. So I showed them what I saw and outlined it with chalk, so one could see the shape of a person dancing in a costume like in the carabana festival. Touched it up with airbrush to make it more three dimensional. I explained how unique a painting of this nature is. Now the students wanted to make their own paintings.

They were quite surprised how they ended up visualizing their own images in their paintings. This technique boosted their self esteem tremendously! Even the size of the paintings, 5'x 7' were quite impressive. The arts program has won extensive notoriety, earning the attention of TVO, the GLOBE and MAIL and several other local newspapers, that have helped to initiate public awareness. As well internationally showing our art through Prison Arts Foundation. The Guelph Correctional Centre was one of the last art programs that existed in Ontario. Art is as important as life itself! All man-made things start with an artist. We live in a system that man has designed and yet we hardly understand not taught the proper way! And because we've been brainwashed to think otherwise. We're moulded just to accept things without knowing how they're made. We remain ignorant. To understand culture just look at the ART. It's not a question of how good you are, but of the process from which we evolve to understand life and become better!

Emma Rutledge: I read in the Wellington County History journal that quite a few inmates continued to pursue art after their sentence was finished, did you ever stay in contact with any of these individuals? The only inmate's name that I have come across is Richard Bedwash who appears to have possibly been in the G.C.C. during your time there.

Arend Nieuwland: I did not keep in contact with inmates after their release. Richard Bedwash started his first painting in my area, but later in their own Native Sons area. When he was released he exposed his work at the DeBoer Gallery in Owen Sound ON.

Emma Rutledge: Although the Yorklands Green Hub is taking more of an environmental approach to the preservation of the property, there are still multiple art events running, including the annual "Artspiration" auction. Why do you think art has continued to be associated with this site after all this time?

Arend Nieuwland: Art seemed to have continued, as it always does because it's INATE. I also believe that the environmental influence of natural beauty, that the inmates have planted throughout the years have made a difference to the inspiration. Or MAYBE it has something to do with the most art distributed program in the province, according to the Minister of Corrections Frank Drea who arrived in Guelph to present to me a trophy and a plaque for the service given in the art program (wishful thinking).

Emma Rutledge: Even after the various reformed institutions like the G.C.C. closed, Prison Arts could have still continued in the current system. Why do you think that the government pulled their funding from this program?

Arend Nieuwland: POLITICS! I understand that the G.C.C. was getting beyond its cost of upkeep. It's an old building. But it wasn't just my program because of closing the institution, it was throughout the province. It all comes down to cutting costs and art has always been on the back burner of being the least important program within the educational system. It should be one of the most important! ART starts with life. The beginning of everything of insight. The lack of understanding, or is it about making more capital gains? I do know that the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer! Where is the betterment for society?

Emma Rutledge: It sounds like you created an incredible educational environment that left a huge impact on the inmates involved. These individuals likely carried with them the experience they gained long after they were released, but what is the biggest thing you learned during your time as the art director at the G.C.C?

Arend Nieuwland: The biggest entity that I have learned was the awareness that through teaching art I captivated the insight I always believed in and made it work for some people! That

was the most satisfying reward one could receive in return! It's in the love of what one does that makes it work! Thanks for asking! I hope you can understand.

Link to Original Responses (password: arendnieuwland):

Question 1,2,3:

https://uoguelphca-my.sharepoint.com/:u:/g/personal/erutle01_uoguelph_ca1/EZIkEoFkuWxHm0GyINmqhXUBUI8m7FSSrBqAPhJzYkcSuQ?e=PD62Q6

Question 4,5,6:

https://uoguelphca-my.sharepoint.com/:u:/g/personal/erutle01_uoguelph_ca1/EbLce-D1VpdBtc25brV6MUsBCmqp23qoeTN3jIBGKuYkaQ?e=evyWin

“Learning, rehabilitation and the arts in prisons: a Scottish case study”:

- “Findings from research from North America, New Zealand and the UK show that arts participation can encourage the development of better relationships between prisoners (Goddard, 2005; Silber, 2005), with prison staff (Menning, 2010) and with their families (Boswell, Wedge and Price, 2004; Palidofsky, 2010). Participating in arts projects also improves self-esteem and self-confidence (Cohen, 2009; Goodrich, 2004; Silber, 2005) helps to develop communication and social skills (Cohen 2009; McCue, 2010); enables people to work together and help each other as peers (Moller, 2003; Palidofsky, 2010) and results in prisoners taking part in other education courses after completing an arts project (Anderson and Overy, 2010).” (Tett, 173).

ARTSPIRATION EVENT:

The Green Door, The Yorklands Green Hub Newsletter, January 2017:

- “It was inspired – and inspiring. It was a unique event, organized by Yorklands Green Hub volunteer, University of Guelph professor of theatre arts Pat Flood. It began with an invitation to local artists to walk the proposed, pastoral YGH site, and discover that elusive quality – the genius loci, or distinctive spirit of a place – to inspire their creative process” (The Green Door, 2).
- “On the evening of November 5, 2016, YGH held a public opening in downtown Guelph for a month-long showing and sale of the resulting artwork” (The Green Door, 2).
- “Sale proceeds went to the artists, with a percentage contribution to YGH ” (The Green Door, 2).

Interview with Irene Hanuta and Pat Flood (recorded video):

Here is the link to the interview: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1o8-S7-5skgkb6ppG1VIGU5czN0ulcrqK/view?usp=sharing>

Interview Questions and Time Stamps:

1. To begin, I was wondering if you could introduce yourselves and tell me a bit about what Artspiration is, how this concept originated, and how you both became involved in this annual event? (2:08)
2. As you already know, the topic that I have chosen for my research paper is mainly centered around the history of the arts program at the Reformatory. Was this event in any way inspired by this creative expression encouraged within the Reformatory? (14:45)
3. What is now the Yorklands Green Hub site has had a very diverse history; It has been a Reformatory, it has been the Guelph Military Convalescent Hospital during the war, since its closing it has been abandoned and used as walking trails, and now it has a future of becoming an environmental site promoting sustainability. Yet, within these diverse

narratives there has been a presence of art both during its time as an institution through the arts program and now through this Artspiration event. Why do you think art has continued to be associated with this site after all this time? (17:25)

4. Do you think the artspiration event will continue even after the Yorklands Green Hub begins to implement these environmentally driven projects ? (35:03)
5. For this project, I will be doing some research through current studies on the impact of introducing the arts in the prison system. As artists, in what ways do you feel that allowing space for creative expression would be beneficial to the rehabilitation of inmates? (46:30)

Frank Dobias and John Valeriote Interview (conducted by YGH):

- “those prisoners maintained the gardens along York road - those gardens were absolutely spectacular – they were meticulously kept – it was a place where you would go for weddings to have your picture taken – for walks in the area, it was idyllic. There’s the babbling brook and the waterfalls and was just a lovely scene” (John, 13:36).

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