

Indigenous Education: All My Relations

Fern Perkins, is the Métis, great-great granddaughter of the Salish laundry woman, Mary Bastian, and her Anishinabé-Métis-Scot husband Alexander Ross. They were the first Métis family in Fort Victoria and on Vancouver Island. They were the last owners of Ross Bay farm before the remnant of it became Ross Bay Cemetery. Mary and Alexander are buried there, not far from Emily Carr. Emily Carr's gravesite is the most often visited grave in the cemetery. Fern often gives tours that include both gravesites and the unique story about the relationship between Emily Carr and the Ross family. Fern is a retired professional educator in both Canada and the US. She currently coordinates the Métis Education Enhancement Program for the Greater Victoria Métis Nation in local elementary and secondary schools. After recently retiring from the Faculty of Education at the University of Victoria, Fern discovered more truth about all her relations, including 'Wash Mary', who was immortalized by Emily Carr.

Fern stands in historic dress, at the replica of the original grave marker, of her great - great grandmother, 'Wash Mary'. Mary Ross was the laundry woman for the Carr family. Mary Ross had a unique relationship with Emily Carr.

