



Ginger Goodwin

Film Summary: This vignette looks at an important figure in BC labour history whose life and death continue to cause debate today. Ginger Goodwin's early activism started in the coal mines of Vancouver Island and continued with the smelter workers of Trail prior to his death in 1918.

Curriculum Application
Social Studies 9
Social Studies 10

The Essential Question: Was Ginger Goodwin killed because he was a socialist trying to better the conditions of the working class or because he was a dangerous criminal?

Summary of the Lesson Activities

1. Focus questions for the vignette provide a short lesson option (15 minutes)
2. Reading assignment to guide students towards developing and defending a "point of view" on the death of Ginger Goodwin in a written format.
3. Opportunities for small group activities.
4. Extension activities can include a class debate on the causes of his death.
5. Additional extension activities can explore stylized editorial writing in an historical setting.

Learning Standards

1. Demonstrate an ability to critically analyze a historical debate and take a position on the issue. **Ethical judgement**
2. Demonstrate an ability to find evidence from different and competing sources and use it to support an argument. **Evidence and Perspective**
3. Assess the varying perspectives on the significance of the Ginger Goodwin's life. **Significance**
4. Demonstrate understanding of the underlying labour and economic issues in Canada during the First World War and how they influenced events, decisions and developments at that time **Cause and Consequence**

Materials and Resources Provided

- [“Ginger Goodwin” Video Link](#)
- Appendix 1- Lesson Strategy
- Lesson Activity 1- the Shooting of Ginger Goodwin
- Lesson Activity 2- Determining Your Position
- Lesson Activity 3 – Justifying Your Position

Additional Suggested Materials

- [Working People- A History of Labour in British Columbia video series](#)
 - 1: “Miners vs. Dunsmuir’s”
 - 2: “Children at Work”
 - 3: “Vancouver Island War”
- [The Labour Movement in British Columbia 1840-1914](#)
- [These Were the Reasons](#)
- [Ginger Goodwin - Miners Memorial Biography – GOODWIN, ALBERT – Volume XIV \(1911-1920\) – Dictionary of Canadian Biography \(biographi.ca\)](#)
- [Albert Goodwin | The Canadian Encyclopedia](#)
- [British Columbia: An Untold Story Episode 2 Labour + Persistence Ginger Goodwin](#)
- [On the Line: A History of the British Columbia Labour Movement p 57-61](#)

Vignette Questions

1. What events on Vancouver Island led to the radicalization of Ginger Goodwin?
2. How did the mining companies of Vancouver Island respond to Ginger Goodwin’s radicalization?
3. What position did Ginger Goodwin take on Canada’s involvement in the First World War?
4. What gains did the workers at the Trail Smelter gain in 1917?
5. Why was Ginger Goodwin exempted from Military Service in 1917?
6. What was B.C. labour’s response to the death of Ginger Goodwin in 1918?

Lesson Activities

1. A short lesson option is to watch the video and use the vignette questions above as an extension to the coverage of the topic “The Labour Movement” in the Grade 10 Social Studies text, Counterpoints 2nd edition page 50.
2. The extended lesson that is provided here helps students understand some of the key Home Front Issues of the First World War. Details of the extended lesson are found in Appendix 1- Lesson Strategy. The lesson focuses on research and note taking to support a position on the events that led to the death of Ginger Goodwin in 1918.
3. There are a number of vignettes and lessons from Working People- A History of Labour in British Columbia that deal with coal mining issues in this time period. They are listed above under additional resources. In addition, the video “These were the reasons..” has a chapter on the Vancouver Island War of 1912-1914 as well as the life of Ginger Goodwin.
4. Additionally, the vignette ["Coal Miners Lament"](#) from the Edge of the World Series; BC’s Early Years can also be used to develop and extended unit on this topic of labour in the coal mining industry of early British Columbia

Credit: Teaching Activities and Lesson Plan developed by John Decaire

Lesson: Ginger Goodwin

Appendix 1- Lesson Strategy

Introduction

This lesson is intended to be taught as part of a World War I unit in the Social Studies 10 Curriculum. Prior to instruction students should have read “The Labour Movement” section on page 50 of *Counterpoints* or some similar reading that explores the labour movement’s response to the call for conscription in 1917.

The teacher should briefly introduce the lesson by describing who Ginger Goodwin was and what his grievances were.

A brief overview of facts regarding Ginger Goodwin:

- A labour leader, who organized Trail smelter workers in a strike.
- Demanded an eight-hour work day for smelter workers during WWI
- Goodwin was a member of the Socialist Party of Canada
- Was a public anti-war protestor. Believed WWI was unjustified and a “capitalist” conflict.

It may also be beneficial to explain to the class that at the time wages were frozen, working conditions were poor and because of the war, there were increasing demands to up production. The government did not, however, initiate any price controls on commodities, staples or other essential goods (as would later happen in WWII). As a result prices rose and it became increasingly difficult for workers to feed, clothe and house themselves. Profiteering was also rampant during WWI, producers of valuable war material charged high prices (this included the mining and smelting industries) and the owners were making huge profits. Possible question for class: “How would you feel if you had to work more, got paid the same, and at the same time, the price of all the things you needed to live went up?”

The teacher can then show the video vignette “Ginger Goodwin” to the class, asking them to pay particular attention to the circumstances surrounding his death.

Body:

Explain to the class that to this day, the circumstances surrounding Goodwin’s death remain controversial. At the time many people believed that Goodwin was murdered, not killed in self-defence. Goodwin’s friends said that Goodwin was a pacifist, who would not use violence on the police. Those aligned with the mining bosses and industrialists said that Goodwin was a violent communist revolutionary, who needed to be stopped.

Tell the class that we may never know what happened to Goodwin in the Cumberland bush, but their job today will be to determine whether Goodwin was killed because of his beliefs and advocacy or because he was a dangerous criminal.

Working People: A History of Labour in BC

This activity will be carried out in three steps:

- a. Determine What Your Position Is
 - a. Hand out the “Ginger Goodwin Research Materials” and the “Determining Your Position” sheet.
 - b. Have students read the materials and complete the sheet. This will have them answer questions which will lead them to establishing a main argument.
- b. Justify Your Position
 - a. Handout the “Justify Your Position” sheet and have them complete it.
 - b. This sheet requires students to back up their position with evidence and good reasons.
- c. Submit Your Work
 - a. See below under **Closure** for details.

Closure:

Depending on the amount of time he or she has or what skill set the teacher may wish to develop, the teacher can choose from one of the following options in order to complete step 3 of the assignment.

- A. Submit Work Sheets: The teacher may choose to simply debrief the class, hold a discussion and have the class submit worksheets as an assessment device.
- B. Write a Multi-Paragraph Composition: Have the students convert the information on the sheets into a multi-paragraph composition/essay justifying their position. Essentially, once the sheets are complete, the students have already completed the *brainstorming*, *research* and *outline* steps of the essay writing process, now they can compose a draft as part of a homework assignment. This can be used as a good stepping stone toward more involved, full length research essays later on in the year.
- C. A Class Debate: This will only work if there are significant numbers of students with differing opinions on Goodwin. The following class, the teacher can break up the students into two or three distinct groups – (1) Those who think Goodwin was a peaceful reformer, (2) those who think he was a criminal who needed to be stopped, and (3) those who are somewhere in the middle (for example: they may think he was a peaceful reformer and union activist, but that he should have submitted to the draft and not resisted the police). Set down rules and guidelines for a debate. It is suggested that the three groups may wish to treat this as a pseudo-trial with the teacher as the judge. Each group could select a student to make an opening statement, a student to make a closing statement, and each student is responsible for making at least one point or asking an argumentative question of the other side, and for making one response to the other side. Using the “Justifying Your Position” sheet, students will have quotes and evidence they can use in the debate.
- D. Write a Newspaper Editorial: Have the students imagine they are working for one of the local papers in Vancouver or Victoria in 1918. They can justify their position in the form of an editorial for the paper. It may be helpful to show them a modern example from a paper today. This could also be considered a step toward more full length essay writing.

Assessment – The teacher can assess the quality of evidence and arguments on the two worksheets, and/or evaluate one of the assignment options.

Working People: A History of Labour in BC

Lesson: Ginger Goodwin

Lesson Activity 1- Research Materials

The Shooting of Ginger Goodwin- Part 1 of 4 published July 11, 2012

<https://theprovince.com/life/81390>

At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were few jobs as gritty, dangerous and miserable as coal mining. Men and boys worked in deplorable conditions, sacrificing their health and safety so that corporations like the Canadian Collieries could make profits on the global market. Vancouver Island's mines, from Ladysmith to Cumberland, were world-renowned for the fine quality of their product, but they were also brutal places that scarred the landscape and resulted in sharp divisions between worker and management.

By September 1912, tension between coal miners and management reached its breaking point. The Canadian Collieries officials claimed a miner had been fired for working, unauthorized, underground; the union insisted that he'd been fired for reporting gas in mines, which would threaten production. The summer of 1912 had been hot, and tempers flared. Enraged by their employers, the miners of Cumberland, BC declared a 'holiday' on September 15. The Vancouver Island's Great Coal Strike had begun.

The Canadian Collieries did not take lightly to solidarity. When men reported to work the next morning, they were told to take their tools and go home. If they wanted their jobs, each man would need to sign an individual contract that would continue his old working conditions for the next two years.

For thirty days, the white miners of Cumberland refused to sign the individual contracts, and in support, the Chinese miners did not work. When a dozen Provincial Policemen arrived in Cumberland on September 24, they promptly denied white miners access to Chinatown and the Japanese settlements. The next day, mine production began once more with Chinese and Japanese labor – rumors circulated that they'd been driven to return to work by the threat of deportation. The Collieries shipped in men from Vancouver and Victoria to work as strike-breakers. Many were eager for a job, and unaware of the situation into which they'd been throw, they didn't realize that they'd become pawns in a fierce and fiery battle.

Through the standoff, through the strike, the company needed to keep production moving. In 1900, 50% of the coal exported by Canada came from the mines of Vancouver Island, and the Colliery was loathed to lose another day's production. One hundred and twenty Provincial Constables arrived in Cumberland with orders to keep the peace – to keep the coal shipments going and the money flowing in. Just like the strike-breaking miners, many of these men were untrained and wore no uniforms. They'd been sworn in specifically for this gritty, thankless job.

On September 28, all "holidaying" miners were ordered to remove their belongings from their homes. Most of the buildings in Cumberland, including the miners' houses, were owned by the company. Some of the families moved to Comox Lake, where they hurriedly built draughty cabins to shelter themselves from the weather, while others pitched tents along the beaches of nearby Royston.

Through the winter, miners and their families fought to survive the harsh conditions and no pay. Special Constables remained in Cumberland to preserve the peace, but their presence only created more tension. Through the spring, there were continued skirmishes and tension, and the summer of 1913 was full of violence with no respite. But by 1914, the Great War began, fueling the market for coal and, by extension, a need for men to work the seams.

Desperate to meet the growing demand for coal, the company consented to take the strikers back. They were allowed to return to work, but the company would not recognize the union. Tensions remained high; both miners and management were bitter and resentful. It was against this backdrop that the tragic tale of Ginger Goodwin would soon unfold.

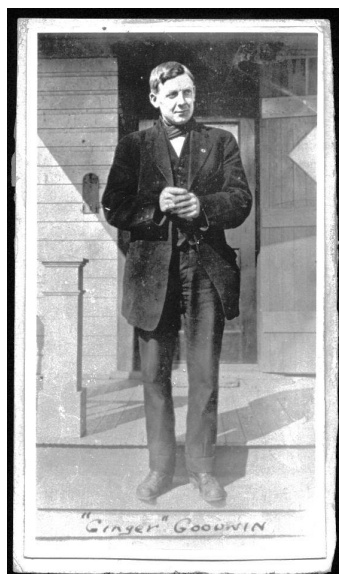
Working People: A History of Labour in BC

Part 2 of 4- published July 14, 2012

<https://theprovince.com/life/the-shooting-of-ginger-goodwin-part-two>

Albert Goodwin was born on May 10, 1887 in Treeton, England, the fourth child of Walter Goodwin, a coalminer, and Mary Ann Brown. With his memorable shock of red hair, his family and friends called him 'Ginger'.

In 1902, at the age of 15, Ginger Goodwin began work at Yorkshire's Cadeby colliery, but four years later, he emigrated to Glace Bay, N.S., where he worked for the Dominion Coal Company Limited. Between 1909 and 1910, he participated in the Great Strike, an unsuccessful effort by the United Mine Workers of America to obtain union recognition, and when the strike was finished, Goodwin found himself blacklisted and destitute. He headed west with a group of miners, to British Columbia.



Cumberland Museum and Archives
CMA-C110-002-Ginger_Goodwin
Portrait-ca1918.jpg

In late 1910 or early 1911, Goodwin arrived in Cumberland and began work as a mule driver and miner at the No. 5 Mine, a lucrative coal-mining operation owned by Canadian Collieries Ltd. From accounts of the time, he was a loyal friend, an avid fisherman, and a valued player on Cumberland's championship soccer team. He was well-liked by everyone, including the children of the town. He attended dances and, rumour has it, he was also a bit of a ladies' man.

In addition to these traits, Goodwin also had a reputation as an eloquent speaker. He was passionate about social justice, and he had a growing talent for inspiring others with his words.

When the strike of 1912 – 1913 swept through Cumberland, Ginger Goodwin watched as miners and their families were booted from their homes. He saw a town divided between company profits and worker's rights. It effected him deeply. The first record of his involvement in a union was as a delegate from the UMWA Cumberland local to the District 28 convention in 1913. He was also a delegate to the British Columbia Federation of Labor convention in 1914 and, by early 1914, he accepted an appointment as organizer for the Socialist Party of Canada.

Because of his involvement with the union, Goodwin was unable to regain employment after Cumberland's strike. For a while, he worked on roads but, in late 1915, he left Cumberland and moved to Coal Creek, where he signed on as a pony driver in No.1 East Mine of the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Company.

In 1916, Goodwin moved to Trail and, while working for the Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company as a smelterman, he ran as the Socialist Party's candidate in the provincial election. Goodwin came in third. On December 18 of that same year, he was elected full-time secretary of the Trail Mill and Smeltermen's Union, a local of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers. Soon after, he became vice-president of the BC Federation of Labour, president of IUMMSW's District 6, and president of the Trail Trades and Labour Council.

Because of his congenial personality and dedication to worker's rights, Goodwin's union proposed that he take position as deputy minister of British Columbia's newly founded Department of Labour. But, while he achieved great support from the trades and labour councils of both Victoria and Vancouver, the government passed Goodwin over.

Working People: A History of Labour in BC

Part 3 of 4 Published July 18, 2012

<https://theprovince.com/life/the-shooting-of-ginger-goodwin-part-three>

After the Battle of the Somme in 1916, Canada desperately needed to replenish its supply of soldiers. Very few volunteers stepped forward to replace them. Earlier efforts to recruit in Quebec had failed, and Canada turned to its only unused option: conscription. On August 29, 1917, the Military Service Act was passed, allowing Prime Minister Robert Borden to conscript men from across the country; military service became compulsory for all men between the ages of 20 and 35.

Conscription was massively unpopular in Canada and it was no secret that Goodwin was conscientious objector to the war. A pacifist, he believed that workers should not kill each other in economic wars. In addition, years of working in mines had taken their toll on his health; Goodwin was considered chronically sick and had a rattling tubercular cough. His teeth were so rotten that he could not chew.

But, in spite of his beliefs and his health, the law required that he register for conscription. When he was medically examined, he was classified as Category D, unfit for service.

In November 1917, he led a union fight in Trail BC, rallying workers against conscription and demanding an eight-hour day. Only eleven days after the strike began, Goodwin received a telegram ordering him to report for a medical re-evaluation. This time, he was classified as Category A, fit for combatant service overseas. Despite two appeals, Goodwin was ordered to report for army service.

Goodwin, along with several other draft dodgers, fled to an isolated cabin near Comox Lake, just west of Cumberland. The miners and residents of the area still distrusted the police who had helped crush the Great Coal Strike, and as friends of Goodwin's, they supplied the hidden men with food and water. They smuggled supplies across the lake by boat and then hiked overland. Even the local constable, Robert Rushford, turned a blind eye to the smuggling, hiding, aiding and abetting.

When the Provincial Police searched the area for the group of draft dodgers, they met with resistance from the community and discovered no leads. Empty-handed, they were forced to give up their search at the beginning of summer.

But in early July, a small group of Dominion Police arrived in Cumberland, headed by Inspector William Devitt. With him was Constable George Roe and Constable Dan Campbell. Campbell had once been a member of the B.C. Provincial Police, but he'd been fired from the force for extortion. However, with manpower shortages due to the war, the Dominion Police ignored his past and hired the rifleman for the pursuit of draft dodgers.

On the morning of July 27th, the three men headed to the northern shores of Comox Lake, guided by Thomas Anderson and George Janes. The terrain was harsh and unforgiving, with steep canyons plunging down into wild river valleys and a bottomless lake. When the search party reached Alone Mountain at the farthest end of the lake, the two guides left and the three policemen headed into the forest. Their orders had been clear: "arrest the military defaulters".

Later, witnesses would claim that Constable Dan Campbell had vowed to get the fugitives, "dead or alive."

Working People: A History of Labour in BC

Part 4 of 4 Published July 22, 2012

<https://theprovince.com/life/the-shooting-of-ginger-goodwin-part-four>

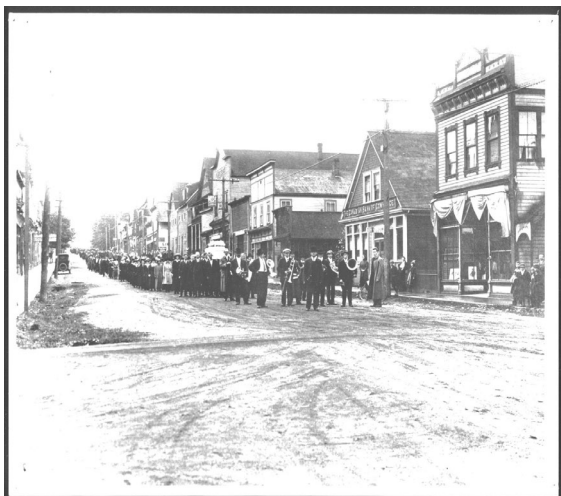
Devitt and Roe took one trail, and Campbell another. At 4:30 p.m., Devitt and Roe heard a shot ring out.

When the two men caught up with Campbell, they found Goodwin's lifeless body. Campbell claimed that Goodwin had pointed a rifle at him, and he insisted that the shooting had been in self-defense.

With Goodwin dead, the Dominion Police called off their search for the other draft dodgers. Devitt ordered Campbell to return to Cumberland and surrender to the Provincial Police. Soon after, undertakers in Cumberland were asked to bury the body where it had been shot, up in the woods, far from civilization. The undertakers refused this odd request, and Ginger Goodwin's body lay in the bushes for four days before it was retrieved by friends.

Suspensions rose of a conspiracy and cover-up. Evidence had been mishandled, the search for the other men had halted, and after Goodwin's body was removed, police set a fire on the spot where he had been shot. In the sweltering summer conditions, the whole area burned.

Some claimed that Campbell's soft-nose bullet had struck Goodwin as he was turned away from the constable — the placement of the wounds led to the theory that Goodwin had been ambushed and murdered.



Cumberland Museum and Archives
CMA-C110-001-Goodwin Funeral Procession-ca1918.jpg

and Labor Council called all union members to protest 'the shooting of Brother A. Goodwin'. In reply, the majority of Vancouver's workers laid aside their tools for twenty-four hours — the first General Strike in the history of British Columbia.

Was Ginger Goodwin a dangerous subversive and lawbreaker, or a hero of the working class, fighting for better labor conditions? Was Campbell justified to shoot in self-defense, or was Goodwin an unwitting victim of a government that wanted to be rid of him? What really happened at the base of Alone Mountain on the afternoon of July 27, 1918? The woods around Comox Lake keep their secrets.

"the weapons [in the class struggle] are education, organization and agitation" – Albert 'Ginger' Goodwin

"Reading Source: K. Bannerman, "The Shooting of Ginger Goodwin" *Vancouver Province*, July 11, 2012 to July 22, 2012. Accessed May 15, 2022.

Working People: A History of Labour in BC

Lesson: Ginger Goodwin

Lesson Activity 2 Determining Your Position

“What were the circumstances surrounding Ginger Goodwin’s death?”

Step one- Establish the context of the event. In regards to the labour issues of the day what were Goodwin’s motives and goals?

Step two- What were the legal issues in the case? What law(s) was Goodwin accused of breaking? Do you think he broke this law? If you believe he did break this law, was he justified? Explain

Working People: A History of Labour in BC

Step three- How was Ginger Goodwin killed? What is known and what is unknown about his death ?

[illegible]

Step four- What is your position on the death of Ginger Goodwin? Hint; Was he killed because he was a socialist trying to better the conditions of the working class or because he was seen as a dangerous criminal?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Working People: A History of Labour in BC

Lesson: Ginger Goodwin

Lesson Activity 3- Justifying Your Position

Question: *Why was Ginger Goodwin killed?*

Your Position on the question. Write a sentence or two that sums up your position- (*a thesis statement*)

Why do you believe your thesis statement is true?

Reasons : In note form, explain the reasons for your position	Evidence: Quotes, paraphrased information, textual references (provide at least one piece of evidence for each reason listed to the left.)