**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.

***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.

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.

**Cumberland Museum and Archives**

**CMA-C110-002-Ginger\_Goodwin Portrait-ca1918.jpg**

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.

**Part 3 of 4 Published July 18, 2012**

[**https://theprovince.com/life/the-shooting-of-ginger-goodwin-part-three**](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 Minster 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.”

***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.

Suspicions 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.

But on August 1st, a coroner’s jury declared that Goodwin’s death had been justifiable homicide. Provincial police charged Campbell with manslaughter. The trial was moved to Victoria from Nanaimo at the request of the defense. Later that year, in October, the grand jury of the Victoria fall assizes held a closed session and refused to commit Campbell for trial.  With their ruling, the constable was cleared of any guilt.

On August 2, Ginger Goodwin was buried in the Cumberland Cemetery. Miners, friends and comrades carried his coffin on their shoulders through the streets of Cumberland, and hundreds of mourners lined Dunsmuir Avenue as they passed on their way to the graveyard. His funeral procession stretched for four miles. That same day, the Trades 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.

**Cumberland Museum and Archives**

**CMA-C110-001-Goodwin Funeral Procession-ca1918.jpg**

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.