



Daphne Sleigh

(1927 -)

Daphne Sleigh was born January 8, 1927 in a small suburb of London. Always interested in being a writer, she taught herself to read before entering kindergarten. She then attended Sutton High School for girls, where she expected to remain until graduation. However, World War II broke out when Daphne was 12, and in September 1939 she and her family abruptly relocated to the South Coast. Following the Battle of Britain and the air raids, her family moved again, this time to a Welsh village, where they remained until returning to Sutton following the end of the war.

Despite the limitations of the teaching at her rural Welsh school, Daphne was awarded a full scholarship to Oxford University where she graduated in 1948 with a degree in Modern Languages. She then took a position in an architectural library, where she met student architect Francis Sleigh, and they were married in 1950. Two children followed: Sarah in 1951 and Nicholas in 1953. When Daphne was expecting their third child, Rosemary, they immigrated to British Columbia in 1957, eventually settling in Maple Ridge. By 1980 the Sleighs felt Maple Ridge was becoming too urban and so purchased an old homestead in Deroche, where they have lived ever since.

While in Maple Ridge, Daphne joined the University Women's Club when they formed in 1964, and through that organization she co-authored her first book, *Maple Ridge: a History of Settlement*. During this time she spent several years working as the curator of the Maple Ridge Museum and later devoted her time to volunteering in the archives of the Kilby Store Museum.

It was these experiences that led her to begin research for a new book about Deroche. Daphne self-published *Discovering Deroche* in 1983, which won the Lieutenant Governor's Award from the BC Historical Federation. Since then, she has written eight more books, progressing from laboriously hand-written notes to creating her own maps and layouts with a computer, which she describes as "a joy to work with."

Over time she has established herself as a published author and BC historian. Daphne hopes to be remembered for having saved some Canadian history through her work, while at the moment, she says, "my chief thought is contentment with what life's offered to me."

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