

## Vancouver

### How did Webster decide it was 'color,' not 'colour'?

America's Merriam-Webster dictionary is 200 years old this year, and its publisher is coming to Clark College to mark the anniversary.

John M. Morse, who is also president of Merriam-Webster, will be at Gaiser Hall on Oct. 17 to lead a discussion titled "Dictionaries and Democracy: 200 Years of Dictionary Making in America."

Morse will visit from noon to 1 p.m. The event is free and open to the public.

Morse will focus on how Noah Webster, after whom the company is named, created "A Compendious Dictionary of the English Language" in 1806. It was the first dictionary to include words used daily in the United States, and in it, Webster challenged the spelling, pronunciation and history of words and definitions in existing dictionaries.

For example, it was Webster who dropped the British spelling of colour for the American version: color. The dictionary included words such as chowder, hickory and skunk, words that were commonly used in the U.S. but not included in other lexicons.

About 6½ inches tall and 4 inches wide, the "compendious dictionary" marked the beginning of U.S. lexicography.

Morse's stop in Vancouver is one of eight visits he is making across the U.S. speaking about the dictionary's history.