

Vancouver Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

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Dry Docks and Final Resting Spots

Summer Field Trips for VHS Members

In 1928, Hull Number 114, a wood Arctic patrol vessel commissioned by the Minister of Justice for the RCMP, was fully outfitted at the Burrard Dry Dock in North Vancouver and released under the name St. Roch. It would later go on to considerable fame as the first vessel to travel the Northwest Passage from west to east, as well as being the first vessel to circumnavigate North America. The St. Roch, declared a National Historic Site in 1962, now rests in the Vancouver Maritime Museum at Vanier Park.

Though perhaps not as acclaimed as the St. Roch, many other vessels built at the Burrard Dry Dock served important careers. Fort Hackett and Fort Yale were freighters

commissioned for the Wartime Merchant Shipping Ltd. and outfitted in 1942 -- they were torpedoed in 1943 and 1944 respectively. And Fort Athabasca -- again a freighter for the

Wartime Merchant Shipping Ltd -- was bombed in the infamous air raid on Bari, Italy (later known as "Little Pearl Harbour"), and was one of the 28 ships lost.

The Vancouver Historical Society has been invited by the North Vancouver Museum and Archives and Waterfront Productions to explore the former

Burrard Dry Dock site on Friday July 20, 2012. Led by guides dressed as World War II dock workers, we will learn about maritime history, "Victory" ships, colourful characters and local lore. While the walk is not strenuous, comfortable walking shoes and a sun hat are recommended. Please also note the parking in the area is rigorously checked, so it is recommended that participants

that need to park do so at Lonsdale Quay. The tour starts at 10:00am, and participants will be contacted in the days prior with the exact meeting place. This tour is for members of



Burrard Dry Dock facilities circa 1948

Photo: City Of Vancouver Archives AM54-S4 Wat P58

Next Meeting: 7:30 PM, Thursday, September 27, 2012 at Museum of Vancouver

President's Notes

This marks the beginning of my third term as president of the Vancouver Historical Society. Thank you, once again, for your support. I'm excited to serve the Society for another year, and to work with the team of volunteers that make every year a success.

Our regular activities -- the monthly speakers, the field trips, the incorporation luncheon, our newsletter and website -- continue to deliver on our mandate to the highest standards. But we have also looked for opportunities to improve.

One such opportunity is the expansion of our participation in Vancouver's summertime car-free days and neighbourhood festivals. In addition to showing our City Reflections DVD and historic photographs, we want to bring local historians into contact with neighbourhood residents. If you are a historian of your neighbourhood (or just know a lot), please contact me.

As with each year, our agenda for the coming season is also full of exciting challenges. Two such challenges will be to address the process of growing our membership and stabilizing our finances, both of which have already begun. Your participation in the recent membership survey was an important first step in building the Society's future path. Thank you to all that took the time to respond.

I am pleased to continue to work on the board with Elizabeth Hawkins, Kellan Higgins, Robert McDonald, Jim McGraw and Bruce Watson, and our generous volunteers, such as Barbara Coles, Margaret Dinwoodie, Andrew Martin, Anne Mathisen, and others. I will miss Jean Mann, Jean Wilson, and Kristen Wong, who have stepped down, but look forward to working with Michael Kluckner, Eve Lazarus and Florence Sung.

If you were unable to attend the Society's 2012 Annual General Meeting but would like to review the reports that were distributed, please let me know and I can email a copy of the package.

Scott Anderson, President
sanderson@vancouver-historical-society.ca

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VHS Summer Field Trips

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the Vancouver Historical Society only, and will be limited to 20 participants. Please call or email the VHS Info Line by Monday, July 16, 2012 to reserve your spot!

For our August field trip we'll join Lorraine Irving, president of the BC Genealogical Society, for a guided tour through Mountain View Cemetery on Saturday August 18, 2012.

The stories of the cemetery are limitless, and this walk will embrace the eclectic nature of the site. We will visit the first resident... and who *was* to be the first resident. "Walking through the cemetery is like walking through the history of the city," says Ms. Irving. From our bravest and boldest to the unfortunate victims of unexpected circumstance, from mayors, pioneers and business magnates, we will explore cross-sections of Vancouver in light of the equalization that is the grave.



**Grave marker of Mayor
McLean**

*Photo: City of Vancouver Archives
AM54-S4 Mon P6*

This field trip will start at 10:00am, and participants will be contacted in the days prior with the exact meeting place. Please wear comfortable walking shoes, and a sun hat is recommended. This tour is for members of the Vancouver Historical Society only, and will be limited to 30 participants. Please call or email the VHS Info Line by Monday, August 13, 2012, to reserve your spot!

Scott Anderson

BCHF's Online History Bookstore

The B.C. Historical Federation's Website Book Store now features 21 books on many aspects of B.C.'s exciting and colourful history. Most books are self-published by different historical societies around the province. Check out the selection at www.bchistory.ca/publications/store/index.html then view the Book Store inventory. Books can be purchased online through the Federation's Paypal link.

Cycling In Vancouver continued from Page 4

Watch the 1907 William Harbeck film to see the many cyclists riding on Vancouver's streets over 100 years ago. (The film is shown at the Museum of Vancouver and is also part of the Vancouver Historical Society's *City Reflections* DVD available at various retailers. See www.vancouver-historical-society.ca.)



Professional cyclist “Handsome” Harry Hooper (as he called himself) beside bicycle “training machines” in 1901. Harry arrived in Vancouver in 1886 from Napanee, Ontario becoming the city’s first taxi driver in 1903 with his two-cylinder Ford. He would own a taxi company by 1910. Harry died in 1956 at age 81.

Photographer: Richard H. Trueman, City of Vancouver Archives AM54-S4: Trans P51

City Council ordered several bike paths to be constructed where bicycle traffic was heaviest, mostly in the downtown peninsula. The paths were six feet wide, cinder-surfaced and rolled flat, and built between the roadway and sidewalk. According to Major Matthews, these paths were “constantly kept in order, level and smooth, by city workmen.”

The popularity of bicycling by everyone soon started to fade. Streetcar service was gradually extended to reach most parts of the city and it was a much more comfortable ride in the rain.

In just a few years, the streetcar system itself was soon fighting off the popularity of a new competitor for passengers. The motor car, a one-time finicky plaything for the rich and eccentric, had quickly developed into a dependable and even affordable vehicle for many.

Jim McGraw

Upcoming Speakers

The VHS invites everyone (including non-members) to attend our monthly talks. The talks are free and are held at the Museum of Vancouver, 1100 Chestnut Street (close to Vanier Park) at 7:30 PM on the fourth Thursday of every month except June, July, August, December).

Thursday, Sept. 27, 2012 - 7:30pm

Indigenous History of the Vancouver Area

Speaker: Rudy Reimer

A few thousand years ago, the first human settlements were being created in what we know today as Greater Vancouver. A member of the Squamish Nation, Assistant Professor in Native Studies and Archaeology at SFU, our speaker will give us a snapshot of longtime places and spaces. He will offer insight on how we should view and acknowledge these concepts of settlement, resource sharing and everyday living on a broader everyday scale.

Thursday, Oct. 25, 2012 - 7:30pm

Vancouver Noir

Speakers: John Belshaw and Diane Purvey

In the 1930s to the 1950s, the rain-slicked streets of Vancouver were the setting for crime, decay, repressive liquor laws, juvenile delinquency, cynicism, gangsterism, alienated fast talking men and women of questionable virtue, murders and murder plots. Our speakers examine this fascinating period through period newspaper photos and news accounts.

Thursday, Nov. 22, 2012 - 7:30pm

British Columbia: A New Historical Atlas

Speaker: Derek Hayes

A favourite speaker is back with us to unveil his latest work: *British Columbia: A New Historical Atlas*. How is a historical atlas different from a regular atlas? While a traditional atlas contains detailed topographies and geopolitical landscapes, a historical atlas chronicles history through all that plus old maps, charts and photographs, accompanied by explanatory texts or essays.

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Bicycling in Vancouver



Philip Timms with bicycle at Spanish Bank

Photo: Vancouver Public Library VPL 18546



Granville looking north from about Dunsmuir

Photo: City of Vancouver Archives AM54-S4 Str P361

For the past number of years, June has been designated National Bike Month in the Lower Mainland and across Canada. (For events, visit www.best.bc.ca).

In Vancouver we have read about the friction among merchants, motorists, cyclists and cycling advocates as the city builds new bike paths along streets, especially in the downtown core.

A little more than one hundred years ago, bicycles were also a big part of Vancouver. In *Early Vancouver Volume One*, Vancouver's Archivist Major Matthews wrote: "The bicycle 'craze' was prevalent in Vancouver, as elsewhere, about 1900; almost every family had at least one, some had more; nearly all young men, and most young women, many elderly men and some elderly women rode."

This was at a time when motor vehicles of any kind were in their infancy and if anything — mostly a plaything for the very rich. Not everyone had the space or money to keep a horse and the streetcar system still didn't serve the whole city.

The bicycle was an affordable and convenient way to get

around. Advances in bicycle design also made cycling easier and more comfortable.

The invention of the pneumatic tire in the 1880s smoothed out the ride on the rough streets of the day. In that same period, the two equal-sized wheels of the "safety" bicycle had replaced the huge front wheel and tiny rear wheel of the "penny-farthing." That change alone made riding a bicycle a lot simpler and less dangerous.

Cycling became so popular, racks were installed in office vestibules, hotel lobbies, City Hall, the CPR train station, parks and many other locations. Bicycle riding schools were established.

City Council passed bicycling laws. You had to have a license to ride. Riding at night without a light was against the law. With the poor condition of the roads, many cyclists would ride on the wooden sidewalks especially early in the morning or late at night. A new law was passed — riding on the sidewalk would now be punishable by a five-dollar fine on the first offence!

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Vancouver Historical Society Executive Board: 2012 - 2013 (Elected May 24, 2012)

EXECUTIVE

President/Treasurer	Scott Anderson
Vice President	Robert McDonald
Recording Secretary	Kellan Higgins
Director (Membership)	Elizabeth Hawkins
Director	Michael Kluckner
Director	Eve Lazarus
Director (Newsletter Editor)	Jim McGraw
Director	Florence Sung
Director	Bruce M. Watson

APPOINTED POSITIONS

Webmaster	Quasar Data
Archivist	Elizabeth Hawkins
Info Line	Bruce Watson
Newsletter Mailing	Margaret Dinwoodie

CONTACT INFORMATION

Vancouver Historical Society Information Line: 604-878-9140
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 3071 Vancouver, BC V6B 3X6
Website: www.vancouver-historical-society.ca
Newsletter Editor: jmcgraw@vancouver-historical-society.ca