

Vancouver Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

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Summer Field Trips: Discover Commercial Drive and celebrate Stanley Park's 125th anniversary!

Commercial Drive, or "The Drive" as the street is universally known, is a multicultural and eclectic street that had its beginnings as a skid row

for dragging logs to Burrard Inlet. The Drive is home to a wildly interesting mix of businesses and restaurants catering to everyone from the counterculture to young urban professionals and everyone in between. This little explored area holds a rich history of early Grandview neighbourhood settlers and their magnificent homes, various multicultural influences, and artistic expressions.

Surrounded by industrial and commercial sites, this area developed a character of its own, with an eye to the social welfare of its residents, and its beautification by its creative inhabitants.

The Vancouver Historical Society will be hosting a summer tour of

this fascinating neighbourhood with Maurice Guibord. Please sign up by Wednesday, July 24th through the Infoline (604-878-9140) or the

Maurice Guibord is the President of the Société historique francophone de la Colombie-Britannique and a Board member of the BC Historical



Looking northeast on Commercial Drive from the second floor window of a building on the southwest corner of Second Avenue in 1927 showing the Grandview Theatre and an interurban car in the foreground heading for New Westminster and eventually east into the Fraser Valley.

Photo: City of Vancouver Archives CVA 105-2 (Donated to the Archives by K.G. Scrimgeour in 1976)

Vancouver Historical Society email (info@vancouver-historical-society.ca). The tour will be held on Saturday, July 27th, from 10am to noon, beginning at Mosaic Park, Charles Street and McLean Drive. Please wear appropriate shoes.

Federation and the Friends of the Vancouver City Archives. He has been involved in culture and heritage for almost 30 years. He is also a founding director of the Heritage Vancouver Society, and is active as a guide with the Vancouver Heritage Foundation and with Radio-Canada as a chronicler in the heritage field. He has been a resident of the Lower Mainland for over

20 years and is presently finishing a Masters in History at Simon Fraser University.

From humble beginnings as a military reserve to a jewel in Vancouver's

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Next Meeting: 7:30 p.m., Thursday, September 26, 2013 at Museum of Vancouver

President's Notes

Taking on the role of Vancouver Historical Society (VHS) president has led me to reflect on my own long association with the society. It started in the 1970s when I was a graduate student at UBC, and while a long-time member I have been more an intermittent participant than a regular contributor. It was my mentor in the History Department at UBC, Keith Ralston, who first encouraged me to join. As a BC historian and former curator of the Vancouver Maritime Museum Keith felt strongly that local history was both interesting and important, a perspective that helped channel my own doctoral research towards a study of the early Vancouver business community. Keith was also keen to consolidate the new direction for the VHS that he, Neil Sutherland, Elizabeth Walker, and others had initiated in the 1960s. Together they had given new life to a lagging society, changing the name from the British Columbia Historical Society, Vancouver Branch, to the Vancouver Historical Society, and shifting the focus from provincial to city history. I became engaged again in the 1980s when people like Anne Yandle, Frances Woodward, Jill Rowland, Len McCann, and Peggy Imredy, all good friends, led the VHS in creating the Vancouver Bibliography, the value of which has diminished in this day of internet technology but was an important achievement at the time. Indeed, Neil Sutherland recounts that this project had evolved out of the bibliography that Elizabeth Walker produced monthly for the *VHS Newsletter* after the latter's inception in the 1960s. My attendance fell off again in the turn-of-the-century period, which was also a difficult time for the society when for one year the presidency remained vacant. What a change since then! The VHS that I have reconnected with is a lively, well-run organization that has benefitted immensely from the inspired leadership of the past three presidents: Paul Flucke, Bruce Watson, and Scott Anderson. I am honoured to join the executive team of Scott, Bruce, Eve Lazarus, Elizabeth Hawkins, Jim McGraw, Kellan Higgins, Michael Kluckner and Florence Sung in its quest to engage Vancouverites with the exciting story of their great city.

Bob McDonald, President
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The Drive & The Park

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urban landscape, Stanley Park is turning 125 this year. Initially a military reserve in case the United States invaded the area from the sea, it was logged several times between the 1860s and 1880s. Upon the founding of Vancouver, the area was requested by Councilmen to be set aside as a park for the enjoyment of Vancouver residents for years to come.

The park opened on September 27, 1888, and a year later, its namesake Lord Stanley the Governor General, officially opened the park. Despite its designation as a park, Stanley Park would remain home to members of the Squamish village of Xwáýxway until 1923.



An 1890s-dated photo of the entrance arch and bridge leading into Stanley Park decades before construction of the causeway that closed off Lost Lagoon from Burrard Inlet

Photo: City of Vancouver Archives CVA AM54-S4-: LGN 1048

On Saturday, August 31st from 10am to noon, join the Vancouver Historical Society for its summer tour of Stanley Park entitled, "Secrets of Stanley Park 125th Anniversary Historical Walking Tour." The tour route will head down Coal Harbour, along the seawall to Brockton Point and through the woods to Lumberman's Arch. Finally we'll return to the Pavilion after learning some of the park "secrets."

Tour participants are encouraged to wear walking shoes appropriate for the park. The tour may lead across possibly wet grass and along Stanley Park's rustic gravel trails. There are washrooms at the Pavilion and Brockton Point. The tour will depart and return to the Stanley Park Dining Pavilion, across from Malkin Bowl and near the No. 19 city bus loop.

This tour of Stanley Park is a benefit of membership in the Vancouver Historical Society, and is for members only. The tour will be limited to 20 participants. Please call (604-878-9140) or email the VHS Infoline (infor@vancouver-historicalsociety.ca) by Wednesday, August 28th to reserve your spot.

Kellan Higgins

Pageant of Vancouver

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was totally renovated, once again named the Pennsylvania, and reopened as housing for low-income residents. Most of the other buildings on the north side of Hastings are all still there as well including the Balmoral Hotel, the large Ford or Dawson Building at Main and the Hotel Empress beyond it. Look at the many parade spectators precariously perched on the rooftop edges of the buildings, something that would never be allowed today. Note also cars still drive on the left. That wouldn't change for another seven and a half years.

The parade had started at the Horse Show Building at the Pacific National Exhibition grounds and featured many floats sponsored by Vancouver companies depicting historical events in the city's — at that time — short 28 year history. The B.C. Electric Railway Company photographer is taking a photo of his company's float with the Vancouver Gas Company float just ahead of it. The parade was part of the Pageant of Vancouver celebrations, a two-day event held on Thursday, June 11 and Friday, June 12, 1914.

In a souvenir booklet of the event, the Introduction by one Felix Penne reads: "There is not at present any process which can preserve 'sentiment.' Did such a process exist it might be possible to give an idea of the enthusiasm, the pleasure which was aroused by this attempt to follow the example of older and other cities in setting aside a day as a 'Gala Day' in which Vancouver should enjoy herself and proclaim that she is 'a jolly good fellow.' Egotism is a vice — self-appreciation is a virtue. Vancouver, by one day in the year setting itself a standard of art, hospitality, good fellowship, harmless hilarity and enjoyment, will give an incentive to live up to that standard the rest of the year." Felix Penne was the pen name of Francis Bursill, a well-known columnist for *The Vancouver Sun* at the time.

Despite Penne's breezy introduction, there were apparently no more Pageants of Vancouver after that first one. Harmless hilarity would soon be in short supply. Just two months later, the first Canadian troops would be leaving from the Canadian Pacific's just opened new terminal on Cordova (today's Waterfront Station) for the soon-to-be learned horrors of World War I, which was followed by a devastating and worldwide influenza pandemic.

With thanks to Kim McCarthy in the Special Collections section of the Vancouver Public Library for her assistance in locating The Pageant of Vancouver souvenir booklet.

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 p.m. on the fourth Thursday of every month except June, July, August, December).

Thursday, Sept. 26, 2013

Deadlines: Obits of Memorable British Columbians

Speaker: Tom Hawthorn

A good newspaper obituary is more about life than death. Obits about British Columbia's departed reflect lives of an interesting cast of characters — athletes, authors, warriors, scholars, innovators, trailblazers, writers, boxers, cowboy singers, politicians, and murderers. Their nicknames — Baby Face, Mean Gene, Alberta Slim, Professor Midas, Cougar Lady — hint at lives rich in anecdote.

Thursday, Oct. 24, 2013

Liquor, Lust and the Law

Speaker: Aaron Chapman

From the time the Italian immigrant Filipone brothers opened the Vancouver Penthouse Nightclub in 1947, the after hours watering hole on Seymour Street became a friendly escape for everyone from world famous entertainers to some of the city's most notorious. Discover its colourful history involving vice squads, politicians, judges, and the underworld. It's a unique look at some of Vancouver's history after dark.

Thursday, Nov. 28, 2013

The History of Theatre in Vancouver

Speaker: Jerry Wasserman

From the earliest theatres and opera houses mainly for vaudeville to an explosion of Vancouver and BC-based original theatre of the 1970s and 80s, to today, Vancouver's theatre history is explored by our speaker, an actor and author of several books on Canadian theatre and a professor of English and Theatre in the Department of Theatre and Film at the University of British Columbia.

Pageant of Vancouver 99 Years Ago

by Jim McGraw



Photo: B.C. Electric photographer,
City of Vancouver Archives
CVA AM54-S4: LGN 984

This wonderful and richly detailed photo, taken 99 years ago on June 12, 1914, shows “The Pageant of Vancouver” parade westbound on Hastings Street at the corner of Carrall. The photo was taken by an unidentified B.C. Electric Railway Company photographer from a window of the then two-year-old B.C. Electric Railway’s terminal building, which is still there today.

In fact, many of the buildings in this photo still exist. There is even a business still in the same location. The two-storey building on the far left still houses Knowlton Drugs 99 years later! The Woods Hotel on the far right is also still standing. In later years it would become the Pennsylvania Hotel and then the Portland. In 2008, it

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Vancouver Historical Society Executive Board: 2013 - 2014 (Elected May 23, 2013)

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Webmaster	Quasar Data Management
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Info Line	Bruce Watson
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