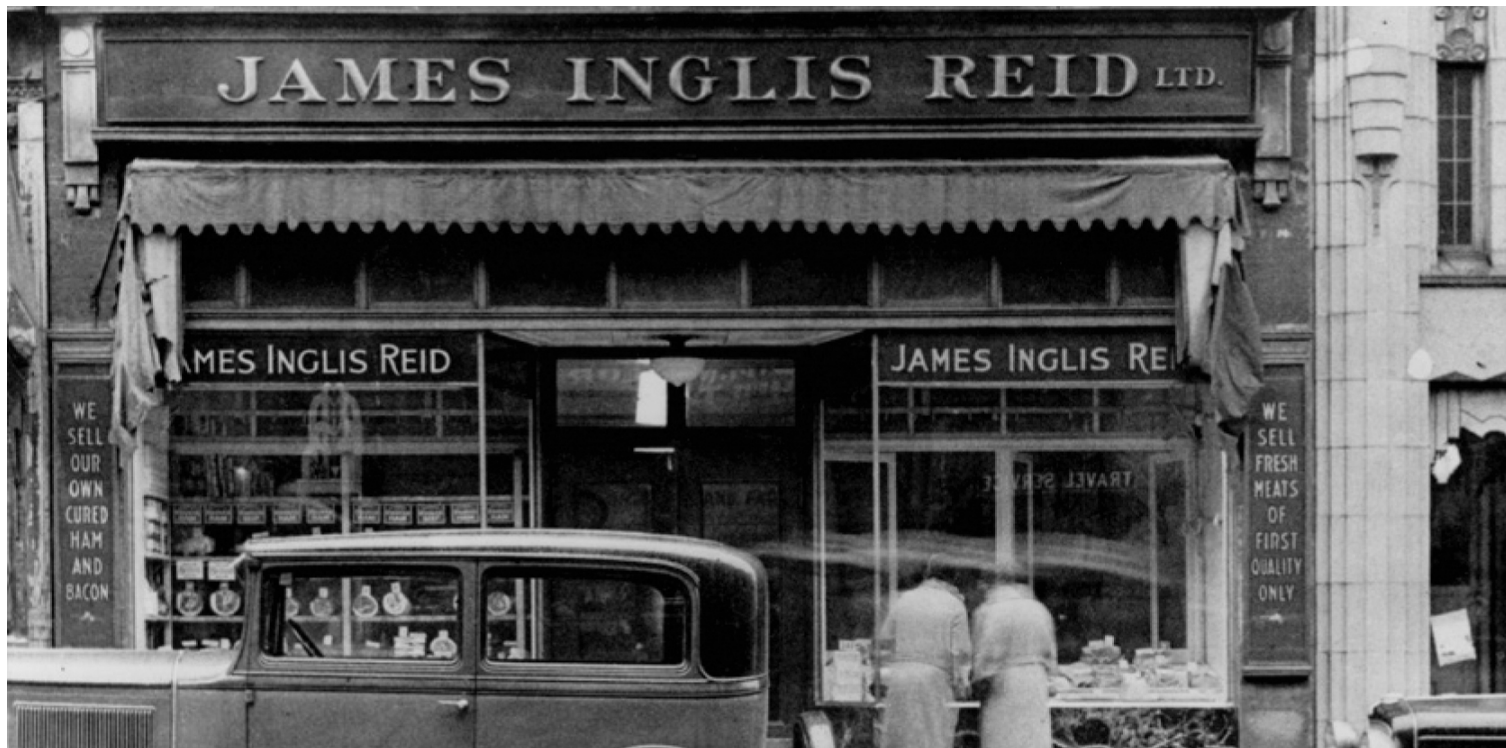




We Hae Meat That Ye Can Eat



Shoppers inspecting the meat-side window of Reid's at 559 Granville, c. 1925–32. PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN, MUSEUM OF VANCOUVER COLLECTION H991.457.23

By Michael Kluckner

In this time of COVID, we are becoming used to closings and bankruptcies of familiar neighbourhood businesses. Will they be remembered for long? Think back – if you were in Vancouver a generation or more ago, you would likely remember Woodward's, Duthie Books, maybe A & B Sound. And if you were an omnivore, especially one with Scottish forebears, you probably shopped at James Inglis Reid Ltd. at 559 Granville Street.

Nearly 35 years after its closing, Reid's granddaughter Anne Wyness has published *The Larder of the Wise*, the story of her family's business illustrated with a rich collection of vintage street pictures, interior views, recipes, advertisements,

and even photographs of meat cleavers and weigh scales. A long-time member of the Vancouver Historical Society and a former president of Friends of the Vancouver City Archives, Wyness became a nurse like her mother Alison and a UBC School of Nursing faculty member. (Full disclosure: I grew up across the street from the Wyness family in Kerrisdale and wrote the foreword to her book.)

It is a classic immigrant's tale, as rich as a plate of Ayrshire bacon. Born near Glasgow in 1874, James Inglis Reid worked as a grocer before deciding to emigrate to Canada in 1906. He landed in Halifax and crossed the country to Vancouver in a CPR Colonist car. His first job was at the high-end H.A. Edgett grocery business on Hastings Street. By 1908 he had saved enough money to buy two lots on Nanaimo Street on the

January Speaker:
Anne Wyness

city boundary, open his own store at 938 Westminster Avenue (Main Street), and make a trip to Scotland to marry his betrothed, Margaret Crombie.

Reid's specialty was ham curing – cured meat such as ham and bacon was easier to keep in an era of small ice boxes (for those lucky enough to have one) and meat safes vented to the outside air. Into the 1980s, cured hams and bacon could be hung unrefrigerated on hooks in the interior of the store. He developed connections with the city's large Scottish community, and in 1915 decided to move his business west to Granville Street from the "old city" centred on Main. He engaged employees who became institu-

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President's Notes

I'd be curious to know how many VHS members have embarked on long-delayed projects during this COVID drift. Something beyond deep house-cleaning, such as finishing (or starting) a family album, writing a memoir, or cleaning out a filing cabinet. What are you doing now, ten months in?



Out of the blue, Daryl Nelson, whom I've known over the years while volunteering for Vancouver Heritage Foundation, sent to me his reflections on 35 years of living at the Queen Charlotte Apartments in the West End. In the covering note, he said he wasn't really a writer but had intended for a long time to record anecdotes of the place, and COVID's enforced inactivity gave him the opportunity. Due to space limitations, we couldn't run his entire piece, but I hope you enjoy the sense of community that comes through in it.

* * *

My "what are you doing?" question above reflects our sense as a board of being isolated from you, the VHS membership. I never felt that when we met face-to-face at MoV. We will be sending out a survey in January, with details to be finalized, asking for your feedback on the virtual lectures and comments on how we will move forward when the restrictions come off and COVID ends.

I sincerely hope we'll be able to return to outdoor field trips in the spring and summer, and soon thereafter to our live and lively meetings.

* * *

I would like to note the honorary degree given by UBC to Keiko Mary Kitagawa, who spoke in 2017 to the VHS with her husband Tosh on Nikkei history and her own family's experience, beginning with her childhood and displacement from Salt Spring Island. UBC acknowledged her work with the following statement:

"Keiko Mary Kitagawa and her family were among the more than 22,000 Canadians of Japanese descent uprooted, disposed, dispersed, incarcerated and enslaved during and after the Second World War. A tireless social justice and anti-racism leader and activist, her work was perhaps best highlighted in 2008 when she initiated a process at UBC to retroactively grant university degrees to 76 Japanese Canadian students who had not been able to complete their education due to forced removal and incarceration in 1942, ultimately leading to the conferral of honorary undergraduate degrees in 2012."

Michael Kluckner
presidentvhs@gmail.com

Upcoming Speakers

The VHS invites everyone to attend our monthly talks, which are being held online by Zoom during the pandemic. If you are not a member of the VHS and would like to attend, please email presidentvhs@gmail.com to receive the log-on information. Members will receive complete information by email a few days before the lecture.

February 25, 2020, 7 pm

Lee Maracle on Indigenous History

Speaker: Lee Maracle

Lee Maracle OC is a member of the Stó:lō Nation, a novelist, poet and grandmother of four. She currently is Mentor for Aboriginal Students at University of Toronto where she also is a teacher and the Traditional Cultural Director for the Indigenous Theatre School, where she is a part-time cultural instructor.

March 25, 2020, 7 pm

L'Histoire des Franco-Columbiens

Maurice Guibord

New VHS Members

John Bentley	Victoria Parr
Kathryn Dugas	Patricia Ryan
Hugh Fraser	Judy Shizgal
Joan Heaver	Denis Sjerpe
Lesley Hutton	Moya Stokes
Theo Lloyd-Kohls	Ann Thompson
Robert Matas	Deirdre Webster
Craig McCulloch	Chester Wisniewski
Kathleen McLean	Aynsley Wong Meldrum
Midge Oke	Wanda Yip
Sally Palm	

Vancouver Historical Society Executive Board: 2020 - 2021

(ELECTED MAY 28, 2020)

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DIRECTOR	Jurian ter Horst

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MEMBERSHIP	Mary Wallace Poole
VIDEOGRAPHY	Elwin Xie
NEWSLETTER MAILING	Jeannie Hounslow
NEWSLETTER DESIGN	Kellan Higgins

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tions themselves, notably Nelson Horatio Menzies, who worked from 1917 to 1964 and made the haggis that became synonymous with Vancouver's Burns Day celebrations. Reid issued shares in the business to his trusted employees, giving them a sense of common purpose in contrast to the trend toward distant ownership and unionized workers that characterized the 20th-century economy.

Reid's story is also a social history: First World War food regulations, followed by public enquiries into hoarding and profiteering; beginning in the 1920s, the rise of the supermarket chains; Reid's purchase and renovation of 559 Granville; the challenges of the Great Depression, with profits dropping by 65% in 1934; Second World War rationing and

price controls (the ration books are beautifully reproduced); employees leaving for wartime service; and, the evolution of downtown Vancouver and its impact on merchants in the postwar years.

Reid retired in 1947, having turned the business over to his son-in-law Gordon Wyness, himself the son of a grocer. Born in Vancouver, raised on the prairies and educated as a mechanical engineer, his wartime job was a supervisory position in the C.I.L. ammunition plant in Quebec. Reid died in 1952.

Anne Wyness concludes the saga with a deft analysis of the challenges for Granville Street's independent businesses during the Pacific Centre construction years, and the family's decision to call it quits rather than try to operate in a mall shopfront. The store's final day of business was November 30, 1986.

Many of the store's fittings and signs went to the Museum of Vancouver; one of the windows from the store, with its distinctive gold letters on a red background, is part of the 1950s display. The Royal BC Museum acquired a number of items including the second-floor fireplace, merchandise tags, a ham knife, and a head cheese sign. The City of Vancouver Archives has preserved many of the business records.

It is hard to imagine another Vancouver tale being told with this depth and warmth – a history of food, a business that became a landmark, an immigrant family “who made good,” and sidebar biographies of key employees. Tune in to Zoom at 7 pm on January 28th to learn more. (And as a postscript, I hope that our late president Bob McDonald, also the son of a prairie grocer, can tune in too.)

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popular CBC TV Show called *The Urban Peasant*. And finally, Bill Richardson, the radio host and author (and his dog Stella). These are affectionately referred to as *The CBC Suites*.

The AIDS Vancouver Suite

Early in the 1980s, a new disease emerged. Very little was known about it except that it affected primarily gay men. Shortly after AIDS emerged as a major health crisis, a meeting was held in the suite of Gordon Price to form what was to become AIDS Vancouver. A few weeks later, I joined the group as treasurer. Of all the events that have taken place in the Queen Charlotte, this one stands out as a proud citadel against the hate and willful ignorance directed towards those afflicted with the disease as well as the gay community in general. To this day, I cannot summon an ounce of forgiveness towards those families who abandoned their loved ones who were dying of AIDS.

The Adam Smith Johnson Suite

Adam Smith Johnson (1888–1948) sold his Shaughnessy home and moved into the Queen Charlotte. A lawyer, he was

known as the “best dressed man in Vancouver,” so the building must have suited his refined tastes. The only information I can find on him is a photograph in the City of Vancouver Archives which shows a nattily dressed gentlemen with a certain authoritative bearing. If he were alive today, we probably would refer to him as an “influencer.”

The Miss Cornwall and Mrs. Scheldrup Suites

When I moved into the building in 1985, I was told not to do any laundry on Monday. It was reserved for Miss Cornwall and Mrs. Scheldrup – the morning for one, the afternoon for the other. Although we had automatic washing machines, these two elderly ladies preferred to use the wringer washer next to the laundry tubs. A bottle of “bluing” stood next to the machine – good for making your whites whiter or your hair a bit bluer. The wringer washer is long gone now, along with Miss Cornwall and Mrs. Scheldrup – representatives of an era when wash day was always Monday and people took pride in their whites.

The Robin Ward Suite

Robin Ward was a columnist in the *Van-*

couver Sun who wrote about heritage matters. In 1993, Robin wrote a book entitled “Robin Ward's Heritage West Coast” which contains his lovely pen and ink drawing of the Queen Charlotte. “This exuberant Spanish Colonial Revival block,” he wrote, “evokes the urban California of Raymond Chandler blended with the European Bell Epoque.”

“Beyond the entrance, with its bevelled glass and gilt swash lettering, the lobby décor mixes Spanish Colonial and Art Deco motifs. The former foyer reception lounge (now enclosed in one of the ground floor suites), with its Persian carpets and Moorish arches wall niches, looked like an emir's chamber in some Alcaraz in southern Spain.”

The God Save the Queen Suite

Many years ago, there was a lady who sang “God Save The Queen” as she rode the elevator. I never met the woman, so was never able to ascertain the purpose of this patriotic tribute to Queen Elizabeth. Was she a devout monarchist or just training for a role in *The Magic Flute* as Queen of the Night? Was her inspiration Queen Elizabeth or in fact Queen Charlotte, wife of George III? In any case, she was one of the many residents who added colour and character to this icon of the West End.



A Memoir of The Queen Charlotte Apartments

The Queen Charlotte Apartments at 1101 Nicola in Vancouver's West End in 1928 PHOTO BY W.J. MOORE (CITY OF VANCOUVER ARCHIVES AM54-S4-: BU N261.1)

By Daryl Nelson

I moved into the Queen Charlotte Apartments at 1101 Nicola Street on March 15, 1985. It had taken two years for the price of #34 to be reduced from \$139K down to \$98K, which is what I eventually paid. At that time, the location of the QC was iffy – the male prostitutes on the corner had just moved on as the result of a provincial government injunction. Whether they would return was anyone's guess.

The first time I entered the QC had occurred a few years earlier when I went to visit friends. I was immediately impressed by the grand entrance, large hallways and house-like suites. It was very much like a refugee from the jazz age. I could imagine Scott Joplin music playing while flappers danced and toffs quaffed

bathtub gin. Charles Bentall's Dominion Construction built it in 1927 for the businessman and politician H.H. Stevens, until 2019 the namesake of the federal government building at 10th and Quebec (at which time his name was removed for his promotion of South Asian exclusion during the *Komagata Maru* incident).

Thirty-five years later I am still ensconced in Suite #34. Many people have come and gone over the years. Here are a few stories of this remarkable Vancouver landmark.

The Katharine Hepburn Suite

Shortly before I moved in, an enquiry was made about a suite which was for rent. It was from someone looking for an apartment for Katharine Hepburn who was coming to Vancouver to appear in

a play. Unfortunately, Miss Hepburn required a working fireplace -- something the QC does not offer. In the end, she rented a suite in the Rosellen Apartments on Barclay Street which did have a fireplace. Even though the QC experienced the briefest brush with fame, the suite was thereafter referred to as The Katharine Hepburn Suite.

The CBC Suites

Over the years, residents included a number of CBC luminaries. Firstly, Judy Piercey, who read the CBC Vancouver TV News for a number of years (when my father, who lived in Cranbrook, referred to something "Judy" had said, I knew exactly whom he meant). Then there was James Barber who hosted a

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