



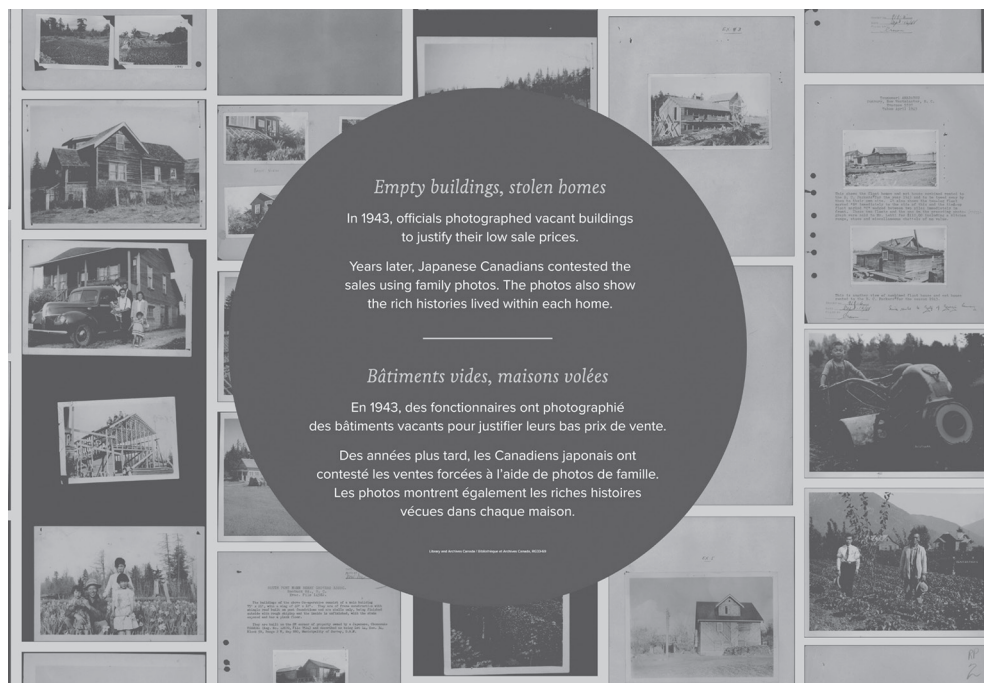
Landscapes of Injustice: Reflections on History of Japanese-Canadian Dispossession

By Jessica Quan

On June 22, 2021 I had a great Zoom conversation with Dr. Jordan Stanger-Ross, our first speaker for the fall. Vancouver Historical Society will continue to present lectures by Zoom, and we are lucky to be able to host an out-of-town speaker. Dr. Stanger-Ross is Professor of History, Provost's Engaged Scholar and Project Director of Landscapes of Injustice (LOI), at the University of Victoria.

Seven years ago, Dr. Stanger-Ross embarked on a journey. I recall the early community engagement and outreach, and VHS hosted a talk in 2014 on the early research and project goals. What has transpired, developed and emerged since then is more than even Dr. Stanger-Ross had envisioned. With a flexible and expanded definition of academic research and community engagement, the Landscapes of Injustice project has produced a summative book of essays, a national (to be international) exhibition entitled "Broken Promises," numerous community events, a website, school guide, and (most meaningful for descendants like myself of dispossessed families) a database of case files searchable by name.

Part of what has driven this particular project is the desire to uncover new perspectives and shift how the Japanese Canadian Internment (mass expulsion) has been previously studied, presented and viewed. The output of the exhaustive research has been transformative. Scholarship has not been confined to the historian or academic, but has included continued community forums, research collectives and access to case files and documents previously closed or inaccessible.



Empty buildings, stolen homes

In 1943, officials photographed vacant buildings to justify their low sale prices.

Years later, Japanese Canadians contested the sales using family photos. The photos also show the rich histories lived within each home.

Bâtiments vides, maisons volées

En 1943, des fonctionnaires ont photographié des bâtiments vacants pour justifier leurs bas prix de vente.

Des années plus tard, les Canadiens japonais ont contesté les ventes forcées à l'aide de photos de famille. Les photos montrent également les riches histoires vécues dans chaque maison.



This month's speaker:
Dr. Jordan Stanger-Ross

Above: a small section of the "Wall of Loss," with photos of families and the properties taken from them in 1943.

PHOTO: KAITLIN FINDLAY, LOI

sible. Primary documents, records, transcripts, newspaper articles, personal letters and legal claims give a much fuller image of people's experiences, grievances, and losses on an individual case file basis.

LOI reminds us of the role of the City of Vancouver and its leaders at the time, of the climate of hostility towards its citizens of Japanese descent (among others) and the contradictory attitudes towards them. Some of the key understandings the LOI project brings to the forefront are the permanent nature of the dispossession and a deliberate "destruction of the home" for those who had built a life on BC's Coast. That real estate

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President's Notes

We're back, still virtually alas, 18 months into the pandemic, after a summer that briefly promised a return to normal. For the foreseeable future we will be enjoying our lectures "from the comfort of home," as they say. Hope to see you "there."

News of our recent speakers: Dr. Lara Campbell's book on women's suffrage has been awarded the Basil Stuart-Stubbs Prize for Outstanding Scholarly Book on BC, which will be presented this month. And Tsileil-Waututh elder Carleen Thomas, whose lecture in January 2019 packed the hall at the MoV, has just been appointed Chancellor at Emily Carr University of Art and Design. Congratulations!

Michael Kluckner, President
presidentvhs@gmail.com

BC History magazine subscriptions

The British Columbia History Federation has decided to move away from processing discounted magazine subscriptions through its member societies.

Their phase-out of the multi-subscription program began on September 1, 2021. After that date, all renewals will be handled through the BCHF website www.bchistory.ca or through direct contact with the BCHF subscriptions officer. Email her at subscription@bchistory.ca or send along a letter to Box 448 Fort Langley BC V1M 2R7.

How will this work? When your renewal comes due, you will receive an email from the BCHF indicating ways to pay for your \$25 subscription via credit card or by cheque.

All existing subscriptions will continue to their natural renewal date, and all discounted subscription renewals paid to societies over the summer will be honoured. They anticipate that the transition will be complete by September 1 2022 as a full annual cycle of renewals passes through the system.



Dunbar Lawn Bowling Club

As it approaches its centenary, the club is putting together a history and would love to find photos of previous players and the clubhouse. If your grandparents or parents bowled, please search through your old scrapbooks to see what you can find. Does anyone know James and Jessie Wood, William Mullett, Ernest Elliott, Perry and Annie Vance, Wilbur and Beatrice Bechtel, or Kate Summers? If you can help, please contact Pat Burns or Gary Parkinson via dunbarlawnbowling.com or by email at dunbarbowling@gmail.com.

Upcoming Speakers

The VHS invites everyone to attend our monthly talks, which are being held online by Zoom during the pandemic. Members will receive complete information by email a few days before the lecture.

October 28, 2021

Land, Food and Knowledge

Speaker: Dr. Nancy Turner, Emeritus Professor Environmental Studies, University of Victoria

Nancy Turner is a remarkable and widely respected ethnobotanist whose research includes the traditional knowledge systems and traditional land and resource management systems of Indigenous Peoples on the west coast. She is the author of thirty books, including a two-volume study, *Ancient Pathways, Ancestral Knowledge: Ethnobotany and Ecological Wisdom of Indigenous Peoples of Northwestern North America* (2014). She will introduce VHS members to traditional knowledge in our region – plants, medicine, narratives, and language.

November 25, 2021

Golfing on English Bay

Speaker: Michael Riste, curator, British Columbia Golf Museum

Renowned golf historian and writer Michael Riste will tell the story of the first organized golf club west of the Mississippi – the Jericho Golf Club, from its beginnings in 1892 on the site of a Musqueam village.

Welcome to new VHS Members

Jon Allen
Eleanor Boyle
Catherine Clement
Linda Quiney

Karen Ravensbergen
Madelaine Terunter
Gwendolyn Yip

Vancouver Historical Society Executive Board: 2021 - 2022

(ELECTED MAY 26, 2021)

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NEWSLETTER MAILING	Jeannie Hounslow
NEWSLETTER TEMPLATE/LAYOUT	Kellan Higgins/MK

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... and property are central to this research adds continued layers of understanding of how the City of Vancouver, and BC's most prominent coastal towns, have been shaped by the loss of a population of over 22,000 individuals who had created vibrant, economic- and culturally-rich communities in a "new" country.

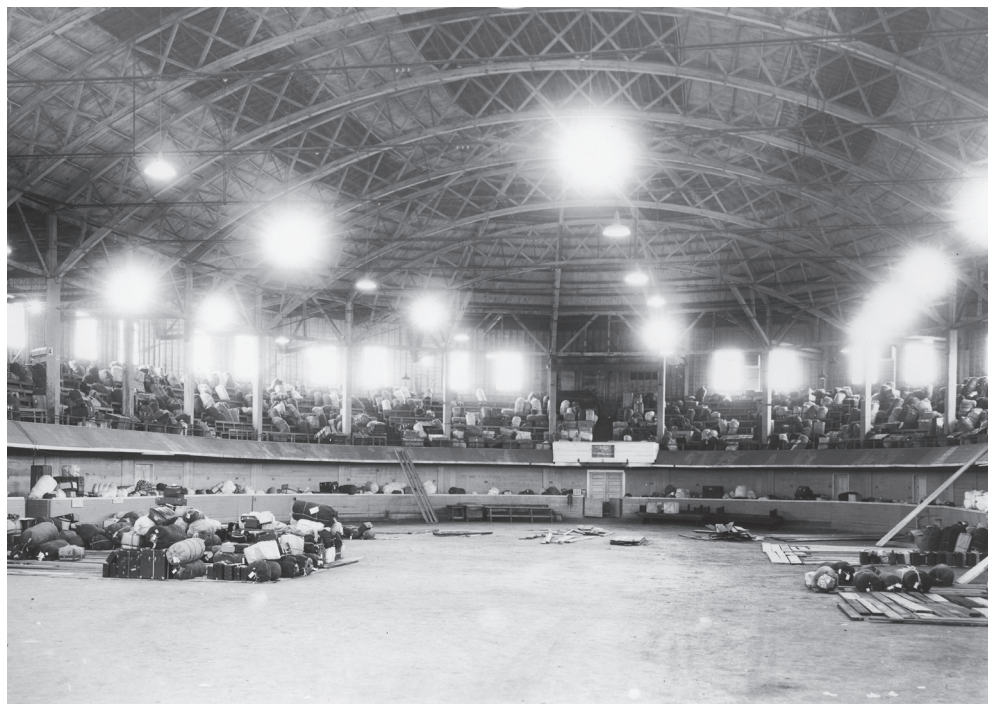
Though it may be almost 80 years since these injustices took place, it is the future generations and third-gen Japanese Canadians (like myself) who benefit from the research, digital access and oral history collections (among many other projects) that are being done by LOI and others. As a result of the LOI database, I was able to search my grandparents' documents and confirm the address in Eburne (today in Richmond) where they and my mother lived prior to 1941. I read the statutory declaration my grandfather had put forth as a claimant, from Taber, Alberta in 1947 (where the family worked on the sugar beet farms and for the Rogers' Sugar factory until they could return to the Coast in 1949).

The property had been left under the care of the Custodians of Enemy Alien Property. My grandfather had asked (and apparently later withdrew) a claim which was valued at:

1 kitchen stove	\$50.00
Household Goods	100.00
Plants in the garden	
Tulip bulbs	
Daffodil bulbs etc	100.00
Total	\$250.00

This simple itemized document spoke volumes to me.

My grandfather was an exquisite baker (we still talk about his apple pies amongst other things), and he was a gardener – one who not only worked by day for others, but who would otherwise be in his own garden. He no doubt found self-satisfaction, peace and energy in the garden in Eburne, amongst the tulips and daffodils, as well at the home he built himself after 1950, back in Richmond, near many others' from his hometown of Mio, Japan. His garden was always a source of pride.



The personal belongings of Japanese Canadians stored in the Horse Show Building at Hastings Park, 1942. Countless items were lost due to careless handling.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CITY OF VANCOUVER ARCHIVES AM281-S8-: CVA 180-3538

I still visit this house and garden today, close to the Steveston Japanese Buddhist Temple and the newly constructed senior's home. I can pick out the gardens nearby where the returning families built and rebuilt their lives 70 years ago. For me, this is never history in the past, and with every new story and research uncovered, it makes me extremely grateful to gain insight into family history that was so painful for those who lived it, that silence and shame were its legacies. Today, those legacies have changed thanks to tireless activists, researchers, "internees," descendants and those who choose to learn, share and speak up.

VHF's first fall lecture on Thursday, September 23 at 7pm will go deeply into these Vancouver stories and connections. In case you want to learn a bit more in advance, visit the website: <https://www.landscapesofinjustice.com>

To look up information by name, visit the Landscapes of Injustice website, archive page: <https://loi.uvic.ca/archive/>

And, to complete the picture, you can read the book: *Landscapes of Injustice, A New Perspective on the Internment and Dispossession of Japanese Canadians*, Edited by Jordan Stanger-Ross, 2020 (McGill-Queen's University Press).



Vehicles confiscated from Japanese Nationals at Hastings Park, March 10, 1942, photograph by Jack Lindsay.

PHOTO COURTESY OF
CITY OF VANCOUVER
ARCHIVES AM1184-S3-:
CVA 1184-88

The BCHF Buy Local Campaign

By Alec Wilson and Anupriya Dasgupta

In response to the financial struggles of their local history societies during COVID-19, the BC Historical Federation (BCHF) reached out to the Community Engaged Learning Centre at UBC, where we and other students from a Sociology historical methods class were recruited to launch an online fundraising campaign. The BCHF encouraged us to pitch our ideas and we responded with two correlated campaigns: The History of Your Historians and A Swipe Away From History. The first touched on the biographies of local historians, and the second highlighted archival photos of a community landmark in juxtaposition to an image from the present.

Alec's Project

I worked with the Bulkley Valley Museum curator, Kira Westby, to pick out and highlight two of their archives online. To highlight historical experiences related to our current pandemic, one of my posts was about the Smithers Hospital Auxiliary Society: a society founded during the Spanish Flu to fundraise money for Smithers' first hospital. The small group of women who founded the society became an integral fundraising and support group for the local hospital. Their relevance persists in Smithers, wherein 2020 they celebrated their centennial. The other archive was a picture of the Smithers central CN train station blended with a black and white photo of the original station. As train stations are a focal point to the history of many BC communities, this highlight focussed on the museum's efforts to preserve the heritage of that station. Alongside these advertisements, my work entailed sifting through BCHF society gift shops to highlight historical books, postcards, slingshots, and other knick-knacks which people could buy to support local historical societies.

Anupriya's Project

I worked with Point Ellice House in Victoria, a unique site of historical conservation as an existing colonial artefact.



Alec and Anupriya, and their projects: top right: Smithers train station then and now; middle: the Smithers Hospital; below, Point Ellice House in Victoria.

HISTORIC PHOTOS COURTESY OF BULKLEY VALLEY MUSEUM AND POINT ELlice HOUSE

I initially reached out to 'Friends of the Archives' E.D. Dr Kelly Black to acquire an archival photograph and a brief description of Point Ellice House which I then drafted into an Instagram post for the BCHF account. We hoped that this would provide public insight about what was being preserved and how. I also wrote an article about the importance of Point Ellice House, for the BCHF blog, after interviewing Point Ellice House staff, Christeah Dupont and Jeannine Worthing, to learn about their roles as well as their motivations and interests in preserving the history of the house. They

discussed the importance of the site, how they usually run operations and how COVID-19 has disrupted that.

Our projects allowed us to directly engage with the importance of preserving BC's local history. Sites such as the Bulkley Valley Museum and Point Ellice House are integral in retelling BC's colonial past. The Buy Local campaign presented a practical and engaging way for us to support local history and understand how we can read the colonial archive in a conscious manner whilst asking what it means to carry BC's histories into our present and future.