



You Got Trouble! Policing the Vancouver Waterfront in the Early Twentieth Century

By John Belshaw

The waterfront. The word conjures images of pleasure ships, dangerous dark alleys, ferryboat daytrips, crime, grime, and rats. In Vancouver – a globally oriented port town since colonists first arrived – it has always been the economic heart and the cancerous soul of the city. A place where fortunes were built and immigrants monitored if not barred, the docks were also where generations of Vancouverites in their thousands found work ... legitimate and otherwise.

Madison Heslop has been studying waterfronts of the Pacific Northwest not as separate and isolated, but as connected by water, money, and people. Workers in particular moved from one port to another, largely unconcerned about borders and nationalities. And because Vancouver always demonstrated a degree of xenophobia, these mobile men were the subject of observation and scrutiny by the Vancouver Police Department from its earliest days.

Between the Klondike gold rush and the Great War, the city of Vancouver



This month's speaker:
Madison Heslop

CONSTABLE IS DONE TO DEATH ON A VACANT LOT

C. James Archibald Was Murdered by Thugs in Midnight Fight.

Body Found This Morning on an Empty Lot on Powell Street.

Dead Policeman Had Evidently Been in a Gun Battle With Thugs.

The Body Carried Two Bullet Wounds Through the Heart.

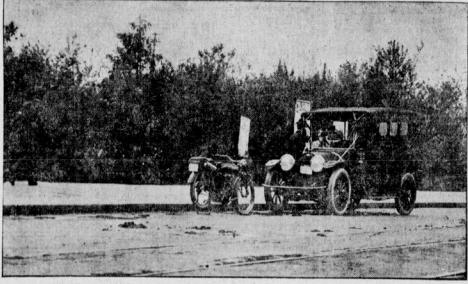
Just about noon, Detective Lewis and Thibault, acting on certain information, arrested Joseph Seymour in a black car near the waterfront. It is supposed that the man was arrested as a suspect in the murder case, but the police will not divulge their information if they have any which will connect him with the crime. Seymour is a well-known character along the waterfront, and goes by the name of "Huck."

Shortly afterwards, the same two detectives arrested a man on Hastings street and charged him with vagrancy. This arrest, following closely on that of Seymour, seems to indicate that it was on information they received from the first arrest that caused them to take the second man in.

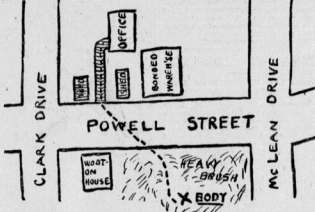
A third man has since been arrested. Every available man on the force is out looking for suspicious characters and the chances are that before night most of the suspected bad men in the city who are given a good account of themselves will be behind the bars.

At 2 o'clock this afternoon a fourth suspect was arrested. What evidence the police have against any of the

MURDERED OFFICER AND CLUMP OF BRUSHES WHERE HE MET HIS DEATH



Archibald's body was found lying among the alders just opposite where the motorcycle stands.



The dotted line represents the course taken by the robbers after they had rifled the office of the Hastings Shingle Manufacturing Company. Archibald is thought to have encountered the men as they were crossing the street and followed them into the bush to the spot marked "X," where he met his death. In the bush on both sides of the street there is only one occupied house, that of Mr. G. Weston, shown to the left of the cut. The warehouse belongs to the B. C. Distillers and is unoccupied at night. The two sheds shown on either side of the path leading from the office to the street are in disuse and have no windows or doors. The rest of the block is covered with heavy brush.

up the station sergeant again. No call came in. It is a common occurrence for constables to go off their beat for a few minutes to attend to something that has arisen within their jurisdiction and for a time the sergeant thought that nothing particular was the matter. At 1:49 o'clock no call came in from the policeman.

Searched Until Daylight.

Sergeant Yorkie got into touch with Sergeant Shirley, who is patrol sergeant on the beat. Shirley went the length of the block but neither saw nor heard anything of the officer. Detective Jones was sent out to see what could be found. Nothing was seen. Half-a-dozen constables as they rang in from different patrol boxes, were sent to Powell street by Sergeant Yorkie, who was becoming distrustful. Until daylight and long after the men searched up and down the street and finally concentrated their attention on the brush-covered lot in the 1300 block.

The blue uniform of the murdered officer caught the eye of Sergeant Campbell at 9:30 o'clock this morning.

Chief of Police Mulhern, Deputy Chief McLennan, Inspector of Detectives Millar, Inspector McIntosh, Inspector William, sergeant declared and a dozen uniformed and plain clothes men were rushed to the scene.

Most of them came back a few moments later. They were

"Done to Death on a Vacant Lot" off Powell Street east of Clark Drive. The front page of the *Vancouver Province* on May 28, 1913.

ver went through a period of rapid transformation. Vancouver's waterfront, in particular, made it a city of connected waters and fluid populations. On the 25th of April, Dr. Heslop will present to the VHS aspects of her research into the waterfront and its complex connections to the city.

She uses the case of a 1913 murder to map out the social geography of the urban waterfront and break down how the city's colonial history and institutions shaped the lives of ordinary people working and living there. Many of the waterfront neighbourhoods have been lost to industrial spaces, warehouses, and even gentrification. But at one time, many Vancouver residents wanted to be within walking distance of these workplaces. Other Vancouverites – especially

those on the west side and further from the harbour – feared the docks and their purported connections to crime, the sex trade, smuggling, drugs, and radical political ideas.

The city's elites and local authorities responded with anxiety to the mobility of regional labourers and the rapidity of change between 1897 and 1914 by characterizing the urban waterfront as both physically and morally 'disorderly'. The case of Constable Archibald's death and the ensuing trials were emblematic of this moral panic. They drew public scrutiny to the landscape and its occupants, equating the one with the other.

As seen through police records and newspaper coverage of the time, the Archibald case captured the landscape

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President's Message

As I write this at the beginning of April, we're less than a week from our Incorporation Day Luncheon at the Vancouver Club, set for April 7th at noon. All of the tickets are sold: more than 80 to VHS members and more than 80 to Vancouver Club members. It's gratifying to have such a big response to this event. Thanks to Vice President Jan Fialkowski who has organized it; Robert Sanzalone, our communications director, burned the midnight oil to set up the registration and payment systems, all of which will be useful for our future events as we continue to struggle with 21st-century tech. Elwin Xie will be recording the talk I'm giving on the Club, its neighbourhood and the kind of society Vancouver was at its founding in 1891, five years after the City itself incorporated. Along with our talks since 2016, it will be posted on our YouTube channel.

You are invited to attend the Society for the Museum of Costume's Annual General Meeting and Curator's Talk on Sunday, April 28th at 2:00 PM, at Il Museo at the Italian Cultural Centre. Please find details on their site, and note that owing to limited seating they are asking that you register for free [online](#). (This link only works, of course, in the e-version of this newsletter.)

And a heads up to members that we may be proposing a change to membership fees at the upcoming AGM in May. This may include asking for a higher amount for those members wishing to receive a print newsletter, as the current fee structure does not cover even the cost of printing and mailing. Our last membership fee increase was several years ago.

Michael Kluckner
presidentvhs@gmail.com



Welcome New Members

Greg Dickson
Lynne Dixon
Jen Eggleston
Michael Francis

Steffen Lehman
Christine March
Frank Winter

Upcoming Events

Our lectures take place on the 4th Thursday of the month at 7 pm at the Museum of Vancouver and are livestreamed on our YouTube channel.

Thursday May 16, 2024

Annual General Meeting

Our annual ritual as a society will be held on Zoom, as it has been for the past several years. The notice of it and a call for nominations will be included in the May newsletter, as well as a request for proxies from members who are happy with our work and unable to attend. All of our current board members have indicated they are happy to continue, which is wonderful news for our society.

Thursday May 23, 2024

The Queer Frontier: The untold story of Canada's queer Wild West

Glenn Tkach

Glenn created the Really Gay History Tour in 2018. He has continued his research on the erased history of queer people in the nation's development.

The May lecture is the last one until September. Director Denise Jacques is working on a program of field trips for the summer months. It will be published in the June newsletter.

Watch our past lectures on YouTube

Search for "Vancouver Historical Society on YouTube" for our channel.

Vancouver Historical Society Executive Board: 2023 - 2024

(ELECTED MAY 23, 2023)

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Policing the Vancouver Waterfront in the early Twentieth Century

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and consequences of the settler colonial everyday. What emerged was an association in the public mind between the waterfront, portside neighborhoods, and criminality that the city's authorities and middle and upper classes leveraged for control. The docks made the city ... did they also make the VPD?

Madison Heslop has lived in the Pacific Northwest for much of her life and spent a year at UBC as a Fulbright student scholar. Her interest in waterfronts is wide-ranging and playful: she has written on how waterfronts are depicted in popular media, such as Batman comics. She's also a serious scholar with a PhD in History from the University of Washington, where she wrote her dissertation on the connected histories of the Seattle and Vancouver waterfronts. Madison is now an Assistant Professor of Canadian history at Western Washington University.

Since 9/11 it has been very diffi-

The CPR tracks and waterfront shacks near the BC Sugar Refinery. PHOTO COMPOSITE FROM THE COLLECTION OF MADISON HESLOP



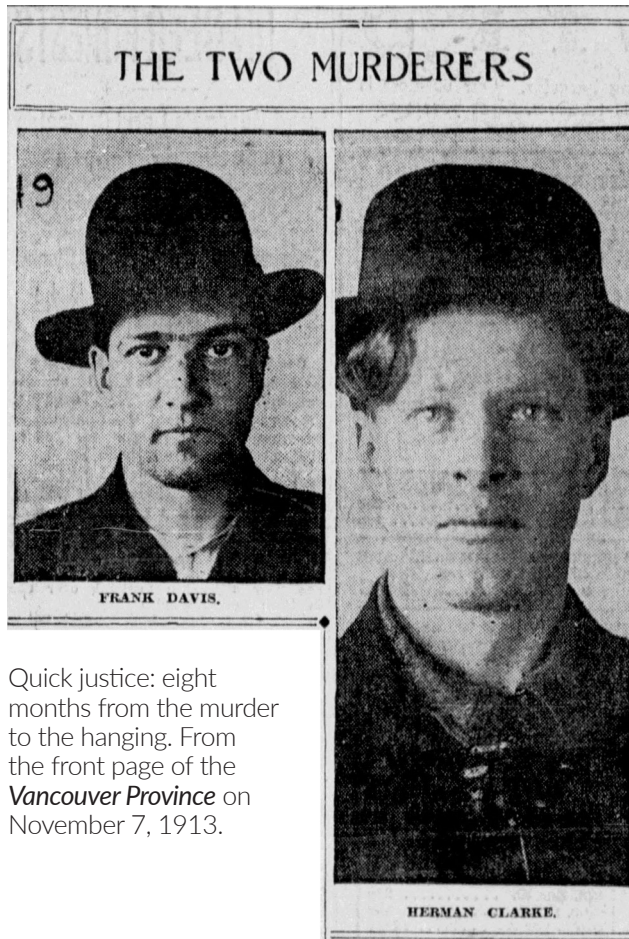
Can the Past Inform the Future? The Acid Room in New Westminster

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1937), and Stanley Kubrick (1925-1999).

I wondered if this vast influence on intellectuals and artists was exaggerated. Perhaps not, as we know that Huxley's book **The Doors of Perception** influenced Jim Morrison, the iconic frontman of The Doors; Morrison was inspired by the book's exploration of mystical insight. I am with Jim. Half a world away, I loved Aldous's book and read much of his fiction during the 1970s.

Quick justice: eight months from the murder to the hanging. From the front page of the *Vancouver Province* on November 7, 1913.



JURY DECLARES TWO EQUALLY GUILTY OF MURDER

H. F. Clarke and Frank Davis Must Pay Penalty by Hanging.

Prisoners in Dock Each Accuse Other of Assassin's Crime.

Contest for Life Proves Ghastly Struggle Against Death.

Mr. Justice Morrison Passes Sentence—To Hang on January 15.

Amid silence the jury empanelled in the Assize Court filed into court yesterday afternoon after an absence of twenty-five minutes and pronounced Herman F. Clarke and Frank Davis guilty of the murder of Police Constable James Archibald on May 28 in a vacant lot off Bennett

cult for the public to access the Vancouver waterfront. Join us on April 25th at

the Museum of Vancouver to rediscover what makes this city tick.

In 1967, the Drug Control Act, signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson, made LSD a Schedule I substance. Canada classified psychedelics as illegal substances in 1968. Although Hollywood Hospital plodded along until its closure in 1975, the drug panic curtailed research by the late sixties. Sandoz Pharmaceuticals stopped LSD production in 1965, claiming that widespread abuse of the drug made further distribution impossible.

The Hollywood Hospital had

many positive results, happy patients and frequent word-of-mouth referrals. Their science was likely imperfect but maybe good enough. With Promethean ambition, they attempted a medical breakthrough, and the hospital was chiefly shut down by cascading public fear both of drugs and 1960s rebellion. This book is timely, given the growing interest in psychedelics to treat the terminally ill. There may be signs and portents contained in this earlier experiment.

Can the Past Inform the Future?

[The Vancouver Historical Society received a request to publicize a virtual event in March with Jesse Donaldson and Erika Dyck, the authors of *The Acid Room: The Trials and Tribulations of Hollywood Hospital*. It came too late for our last newsletter, but it's an interesting tale.]

By Denise Jacques

From the street, New Westminister's Hollywood Hospital didn't look like much – just a rambling white mansion, mostly obscured behind the holly trees from which it took its name. But, between 1957 and 1968, it was the site of more than 6000 supervised acid trips as part of the burgeoning (and controversial) field of psychedelic psychiatry. Under the care of Medical Director J. Ross MacLean and ex-spy/researcher Al “Captain Trips” Hubbard, it became a mecca for alcoholics, anxiety patients, and unhappy couples (as well as celebrities like Andy Williams), its unorthodox methods boasting a success rate of nearly 80%. But the same media attention that brought the hospital to prominence also assured its downfall, as prohibition forces drove its work underground for more than fifty years.

In my experience, Canadians tend to be cautious and understated. Therefore, this story of the wild and woolly experiments with LSD was irresistible. I am curious about how the past can inform the future and why a phenomenon such as LSD can be heralded at one time and then reviled at another.

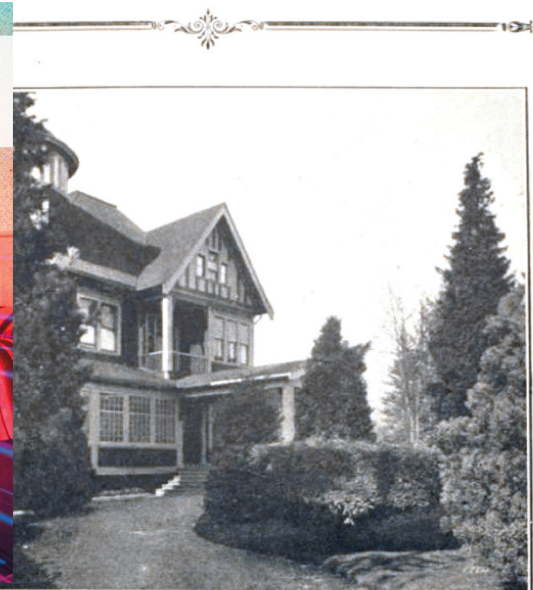
I discovered that the hospital building was first built by a successful stagecoach operator, Charles Major. Dr. E.A. Campbell first opened the building as a hospital in 1919. Surrounded by holly bushes, the 55-bed facility had a remarkable garden. Before 1956, it was best known as a place for alcoholics to dry out. It was recognized for its innovative treatments, including eliminating straitjackets and an open-door policy for patients.

As unorthodox as Hollywood Hospital's methods might have been initially, treatments became more unconventional



The Acid Room was published by Anvil Press in Vancouver in 2022. It is available from local bookstores as well as a direct order from the publisher. The sanitarium was at 525 Sixth Street in New Westminister. Dr. MacLean's research study can be found [online](#).

BROCHURE FROM THE AUTHORS VIA THE PUBLISHER



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with the arrival of two men: Dr. J. Ross MacLean and Al Hubbard. MacLean purchased the facility in 1956, following the death of founder Campbell. Between 1957 and Hollywood's closure in 1975, MacLean and Hubbard supervised more than 6,000 acid trips—not just for alcoholism but for anxiety, depression, and marital discord. They insisted they had a high success rate.

As outlined in the press release above, Hubbard was a controversial figure. After his own experience with LSD, he abandoned his Vancouver uranium

business and dedicated himself to promoting a declared miracle drug. Traveling to Switzerland, he purchased 10,000 drug doses from Sandoz Laboratories. He began introducing LSD to a wide assortment of people, including such thinkers as Aldous Huxley (1894-1963), with whom Hubbard had a longtime friendship. Hubbard recommended LSD to prominent psychiatrists in Hollywood who, in turn, would introduce it to many of their celebrity patients, including Cary Grant (1904-1986), Jack Nicholson (b.

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