

Vancouver Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

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House Genealogy in Vancouver

Uncovering the History of the Houses We Live In

Speaker: James Johnstone

Old houses have fascinating stories to tell. The imprint of the lives of past residents is often palpable. For those unable to decipher the meaning of the whispers of creaky floorboards or old initials scratched on basement walls, Vancouver house detective James Johnstone is here to help.

Over the past years, James has researched in great detail the human history of over two hundred Vancouver homes in Strathcona, Grandview-Woodlands, Shaughnessy, Kitsilano, Mount Pleasant and North Point Grey. Clients have included the Vancouver Heritage Foundation (for Umberto's on Howe Street) and television show host Johnathan Brownlee (for the Clark House on East 5th). Come hear

stories from some of the home history research projects James has worked on. Learn how you can get information about the past residents of your house. For more information on James and his work see: www.homehistorysearch.com



The youngest member of the Vancouver Historical Society, Robin Hunt, appeared with her mother, past president Joanne Savory at the Incorporation Day Lunch. (More photos inside.)

James Johnstone has researched in great detail the human history of over two hundred Vancouver homes, from humble rowhouses and labourers' cottages in the old East End, to mansions and stately homes in Shaughnessy and Point Grey. Articles on James and his work have appeared in the *Vancouver Sun*, the *Vancouver Courier*, *Canadian House & Home* and the book *Vancouver: The Unknown City*, by John Mackie and Sarah Reeder. An article will soon appear in *Style At Home Magazine*. LEFT: Johnstone's own house at 1036 Odium in Grandview-Woodlands sparked his interest in the history of homes.

Thursday, April 22, 2004, at 7:30 pm, Upper Joyce Whalley Learning Centre, Vancouver Museum

Preznotes

It was a glorious birthday party! VHS's celebration of the 118th anniversary of the City of Vancouver's Incorporation, at the University Golf Club last Sunday. We're indebted to all those who helped it happen:

Anne Yandle for securing our outstanding speaker (and Award of Historical Merit recipient) Wallace B. Chung; Elizabeth Hawkins for choreographing the event; others for assisting in various ways; and the more than fifty VHS members who attended. Let's do it again next year!

With Incorporation Day behind us, your Executive is thinking about summer activities. We do not hold our 4th Thursday lecture meetings in June, July and August, but we do enjoy getting together for field trips and tours of historic sites. Here are some possibilities the Executive is considering for this summer:

- A tour and time to browse at the old Hastings Mill Store, now maintained as a museum at the foot of Alma Street, followed by a picnic on the grounds.
- An exploration of the aboriginal midden in Marpole with guidance from local expert Terry Slack, who led us through Fraser River Park last summer.
- A guided tour Hycroft House, the Shaughnessy mansion now home to the University Women's Club.
- A guided introduction to the research resources in Special Collections at the downtown Vancouver Public Library.

Now we need your input! Which of the above events catch your attention? What other sites would you like to visit with VHS friends? Phone or e-mail your suggestions to me this month for consideration by the Executive at its May 6 meeting.

Finally, a reminder that our Annual General Meeting will take place at 7:30 pm on Thursday evening, May 27, preceding our final lecture meeting of the season. We'll be electing at least two new at-large Executive members, and we're currently seeking nominees for those positions. No salary but loads of satisfaction! Contact me to learn more about what's involved.

Paul Flucke, President

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Vancouver Historica Fair: Embracing the Past

VHS is one of the sponsors of the upcoming Historica Fair set for May 7 and 8. The fair will be held at the Vancouver Museum, 1100 Chestnut Street. Close to 100 Vancouver students, in grades 4 to 9, will be displaying history projects ranging from family legends to neighbourhood retrospectives to Vancouver landmarks. VHS members will assist with the adjudication of the projects.

Members are invited to attend all or part of the Historica Fair. The event begins at 9 a.m. on May 7. On the second day Jim Delgado, Executive Director of the Vancouver Maritime Museum will give an opening address. This is our opportunity to support the historical insights and endeavours of Vancouver students.

Vancouver Island Tour

April 24-25, 2004

The Museum is taking the 'Speaking of Design' series on the road. Join others for a weekend on Vancouver Island and in Powell River. Participants will tour little-known neighbourhoods in Nanaimo, visit historic Cumberland and tour the rich architectural legacy of Powell River. Members \$220; Non-members \$250 + GST. For further details call 604-736-4431, Extension 395.

Thank you!

Five VHS members made donations totalling \$310 to the VHS in February and March. Thank you! You know who you are, because you've each received a tax receipt, as will others who make gifts over and above their annual membership dues. It's gifts like these that keep us in black ink.

Welcome to the Vancouver
Historical Society!

New Members

John Atkin and Jeanine Lucas, both from
Vancouver.

VHS MEMBERS CELEBRATE THE 118th ANNIVERSARY OF:

Incorporation of the City of Vancouver.



As always, the Incorporation Day Brunch at the UBC Golf Course, April 4, was a great success. Len McCann entertained us with another maritime story and, as is tradition, opened the luncheon with the ringing of the Robert Kerr bell. Anne Yandle introduced Dr. Chung, our keynote speaker. Thank you Elizabeth Hawkins, right, Incorporation Day 2004 Organizer. Thanks also to the following members for helping make the day a success: Anne Yandle, Isabel Alexander, Wes Knapp, Barbara Coles and Paul Flucke.



TOP, left to right: Paul Flucke, VHS President with, Dr. Wallace Chung, 2004 Recipient of the Vancouver Historical Society Award of Merit for his research, his collections, and his generous contributions to the history of Vancouver. Dr. Wallace Chung, seated between Anne Yandle and Len McCann. Dr Chung showed a few highlights from his life, "scurrying around looking for things."

Among the 'things' Dr. Wallace Chung acquired:

- 21 cartons from a salvage sale at the CPR in 1980. Inside he found treasures like CPR account books for 1917-1946 and a CPR Navigation Co. logbook dated 1903.
- 12 cartons from the estate of Yip Sang filled with items dating back as far as 1889. Yip Sang, first hired as a booking clerk for the CPR, was promoted to Superintendent one year later. Yip Sang brought Chinese workers to Vancouver by ship for the CPR. Inside these cartons Dr. Chung also found Chinese calendars made in Hong Kong for the CPR, CPR pamphlets and colourful brochures advertising travel to the Orient.
- 600 pieces of CPR porcelain, including cups, water jugs, basins and dinner sets of various patterns made for the Empress fleet, all beautifully preserved by the sea.
- 2 builders' models: The Empress of Asia and the Empress of Japan. Dr. Chung's mother came to Canada from China on The Empress of Asia. He lovingly restored the Empress of Asia over 6 years. 'Longer than it took me to get my medical degree.' The Empress of Japan literally found him. All it needed was a good dusting off.

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Dreaming in the Rain

How Vancouver Became Hollywood North by Northwest

MARCH SPEAKER: David Spaner

Reviewed by: Ellen Ramsay

On a rainy March evening, Province film critic and author David Spaner read from his new book *Dreaming in the Rain* (Arsenal Pulp Press) and spoke to the Vancouver Historical Society audience about the early days of Vancouver film-making. Mr. Spaner examined two moments in Vancouver's history: 1959: Errol Flynn's final days in the city and the early 1960s: Larry Kent, the city's first independent film-maker.

Vancouver's early claim to fame in the international film world came about quite inauspiciously. Errol Flynn, then 50 years old, arrived in the city to negotiate the sale of his yacht to a stockbroker in West Vancouver. The story goes that, while here, he suffered a heart attack and died at the home of Dr. Gould on Burnaby Street in the West End. The police autopsy showed that he died from a range of illnesses related to both a heart condition and excessive drinking. His death in the city catapulted Vancouver temporarily into the limelight of the international media.

Larry Kent's story touched the city's film history more directly. His first movie *Bitter Ash* (1963) came out of his student days at UBC. Because of the sex scenes and swearing however, *Bitter Ash* was banned by the censor board in B.C. He subsequently directed two more films in Vancouver: *Sweet Substitute* (1964) and *When Tomorrow Dies* (1965), gaining him a repu-

tation as a cutting edge film-maker. In 1966 Larry Kent won the grand prize at the Vancouver International Film Festival for *When Tomorrow Dies*. He moved to Montreal where he made *High* (1967), *Fleur Bleue* (1971), *Yesterday* (1981), and *Mothers and Daughters* (1992). He now has eleven feature films to his credit. Larry Kent will be back in Vancouver this summer for another shoot.

For VHS members who are interested in viewing Kent's films on video, Videomatica at 1855 West 4th Avenue, has a selection of them.

Coming up at the VHS

On the fourth Thursday of the month, Vancouver Historical Society sponsors speakers on the history of Vancouver. Meetings are held in the beautiful Vancouver Museum at 1100 Chestnut Street at 7:30 p.m. Please join us for our next and last presentation of the series:

Thursday, May 27, 2004

• Vancouver in View: Its Planning and Development History. Speaker: Gordon Price, UBC School of Community and Regional Planning, and former Vancouver City Councillor, 1986-2002.

Vancouver Historical Society - Executive, 2003 - 2004 (elected June 6, 2003)

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