

Vancouver Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

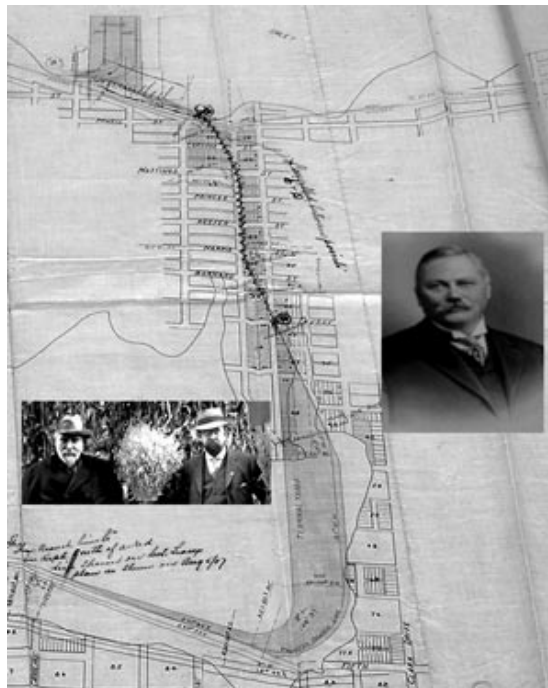
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Railroading a Renegade: Great Northern Ousts John Hendry *April Speaker: Frank Leonard*

False Creek Flats (east of Main Street) has long been a contested landscape. Surveyed, promoted, and sometimes constructed as a deep-sea harbour, an international rail terminal, a warehouse district, and perhaps the site of a major hospital, the area was the prize in a bitter battle a century ago. This presentation probes the troubled relations between James J. Hill's Great Northern Railway Company (GN) and its local subsidiary, the Vancouver, Westminster and Yukon Railway Company (VW&Y), as the American transcontinental established the last of its Pacific termini in Vancouver during the period 1901-1908. Resting largely on docu-



LEFT: Collage: Plan of Hendry's proposed railway yard near the east end of False Creek Flats, 1906. To its left, photograph of James J. Hill and son L.W. Hill; to its right, John Hendry.

LOWER LEFT: Frank Leonard.



ments from St. Paul, Minnesota, the talk recounts the dramatic events in the attempt of Vancouver lumberman and railway promoter John Hendry, president of the VW&Y, to wrest control of the area from the City and the GN.

Frank Leonard teaches history at Douglas College. His book, *A Thousand Blunders: The Grand Trunk Pacific Railway and Northern Brit-*

ish Columbia (UBC Press, 1996), received several awards. His work has also elicited interviews and invitations from across the province, and he has appeared on both radio and television. Currently, he is preparing a book on the activities of Canadian and American railway companies at their respective Pacific termini. In his spare time, he consults widely on Native land claim cases involving railways.

Next Meeting: Thursday, April 27, 7:30 pm in the Vancouver Museum

PREZNOTES

www.vancouver - historical-society.ca

The title of this column says it all: our new VHS website is up and running. Check it out!

The new site, more attractive and informative than our old one, is the result of several months of intensive work by a special committee of the Executive. Bruce Watson compiled and indexed the archive of VHS speakers and presentation summaries (1936 to present!), Elizabeth Hawkins edited the summary of VHS history and several other pieces, and Donna Jean McKinnon provided the archive of past VHS newsletters.

Bruce, Chuck Davis and I served as the “new website” committee, and we’re indebted to Chuck for introducing us to Ariba Dalal of Quasar Design and Data Management, who designed the site, entered the original contents, and taught the rest of us a lot of things we didn’t know! Under an agreement with Vancouver Public Library, Bruce selected and Ariba entered the dozens of images that enliven the text material.

The new site is our VHS 70th Birthday gift to the wider historical community — and to ourselves. Use it, enjoy it, and tell your friends about it!

Paul Flucke, President

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Welcome New Members

Beverley Scott, Vancouver
Rein Stamm, Vancouver
Chris Hay, Coquitlam
Ken & Gail Yip, Burnaby

One Party - Two Birthdays

VHS members and friends filled a large dining room at the University Golf Club on April 9 to celebrate the 120th anniversary of Vancouver’s incorporation in 1886. This year’s luncheon also marked the Society’s own 70th birthday, counting from its 1936 formation as the Vancouver Section of the BC Historical Association.

The event began with Len McCann’s traditional ringing of the Robert Kerr ship’s bell. Following the meal, William Bruneau and David Gordon Duke presented “Jean Coulthard: A Life in Music” tracing the famous Vancouver composer’s life, 1908-2000. Cellist Brian Mix played a movement from one of her last compositions.

The Luncheon ended with the presentation of **2006 VHS Award of Historical Merit** to VHS member **Jacqueline Gresko**, in recognition of her “outstanding contributions to the understanding and appreciation of local and regional history through her scholarship, teaching and organizational leadership.”

A special feature of Incorporation Day 2006 was the presentation of certificates to fourteen VHS members who have belonged to the Society for 35 or more years. Five others were unable to be present and will receive their certificates by mail. A photo of the group, with names, will appear in the May newsletter.



LEFT: Paul Flucke presenting VHS award to Jacqueline Gresko.

BELOW: Len McCann with the bells of the Robert Kerr and the Beaver.



LEFT: Luncheon speakers David Gordon Duke and Bill Bruneau.

VHS Supports Kogawa House Campaign

You've probably read about the all-out effort to raise funds to save the childhood home of Joy Kogawa, chronicler of the WWII interment of Japanese through her novel *Obasan* and children's book *Naomi's Road*.

VHS members will remember Joy's presence with us for a preview performance of Vancouver Opera's version of *Naomi's Road* at our meeting last May.

At its April 6 meeting the VHS Executive voted a contribution of \$500 from our Research and Publication Fund to that effort, now being managed by the Land Conservancy. To learn more about the project, go to the Land Conservancy's website at www.conservancy.bc.ca, and click on "Kogawa House."

To make a personal contribution, you may mail your cheque to The Land Conservancy, 5655 Sperling Avenue, Burnaby BC V5E 2T2. To contribute online, click on the red "Donate" box. (Note to receive a donation receipt for your entire contribution, do not check "I currently support TLC" on the donation form.)

Say "Yes" to "Informed Consent"

On May 16, 2006, Canadians will fill out a census form from Statistics Canada for the 2006 Census. This form will include the following question:

Does this person agree to make his/her 2006 Census information available for public release in 2098 (92 years later)? Yes ___ No ___.

If this question is answered No or left unanswered, your descendants will be unable to find information on you in census records in 2098, 92 years on. If a large number of respondents respond negatively or not at all to this question, it will destroy the completeness of the records and skew them so that their value to historical or genealogical researchers will be forever destroyed.

Help us ensure that this does not happen, and please, alert your family and friends to the significance of this question.

-- *Elizabeth Walker*



Coming Up...

Upcoming VHS Speakers

The VHS invites everyone (including non-members) to attend our monthly talks. Admission is free. Talks are held at the Vancouver Museum, 1100 Chestnut Street (close to Vanier Park), at 7:30 pm on the 4th Thursday of every month.

• Thursday, April 27, 7:30 pm
Railroading a Renegade: Great Northern Ousts John Hendry – Frank Leonard (See Front Page for details.)

• Thursday, May 25, 7:30 pm
A VHS "Show-and-Tell"
- Video preview of our Harbeck DVD project
- Short work-in-progress reports from VHS historians
- A brief AGM, with election of new officers and directors

My Mother's Mother's Mother

A Mother's Day Show & Tell

Sunday May 14th, 2006

1:30 pm

Vancouver Museum,
1100 Chestnut St.

Free with museum admission
(604) 736-4431

www.vanmuseum.bc.ca

Come honour your foremothers on Mother's Day. Bring an item, memento or maybe even a photo relating to your mother, grandmother or great-grandmother or even better, bring Mom or Grandma to tell the story themselves! Show your item and briefly share with the group the story behind it... or just come and listen.

March Speaker - Jean Barman Race and Remembrance in Stanley Park

Dr. Jean Barman threw startling new light on the early history of Stanley Park and by extension the city of Vancouver in her March 23 talk to the Vancouver Historical Society. It's been an article of faith since the city was born that the park began its modern history as a military reserve set up by Col. Richard Moody of the Royal Engineers to guard the entrance to the harbor (Burrard Inlet) in the event of an American invasion.

Now it seems that may not be strictly true. In her very thorough researches into the fate of the families who lived on the park peninsula—and who were evicted from it once the decision was made to make it a park—Dr. Barman found no official record that a reserve was ever established.

That's important because it was the "official" status of the land as a military reserve that made it legally possible to evict the people living there. "For reserves to become official," Dr. Barman explained, "the policy is that they have to be publicly proclaimed or 'gazetted.' But Moody appears to have issued no notices or placed any in the press and kept no official record. All that survives is an undated Royal Engineers map outlining 'naval reserves' in blue and 'military reserves,' including the [Stanley Park] peninsula, in red. However, the map was not signed by Moody, which was the accepted means of making it official. In other words, Moody used neither of the two accepted means—gazetting and map signing—that would formally have made the future Stanley Park a reserve, or so it seems from the surviving records."

That preceding quote from Dr. Barman is taken from her new book, *Stanley Park's Secret*, the basis of her talk. She

made the same point in her talk, but by quoting directly from the book we can be sure of accuracy.

Speaking quickly, and without notes, she told of how a woman named Mabel McPhee took her to Mountain View Cemetery to show her the graves of people who had lived at "Kanaka Ranch," a settlement at what is now the north foot of Denman Street, of Hawaiian-descended people. Ms. McPhee also gave her a floppy disc on which she had typed her life story. As well, Dr. Barman was familiar with the stories of many of the Aboriginal families who had lived on the peninsula. At that point, Dr. Barman said, "I decided the book had to be done." Her work was helped immensely by the fact that one old-timer still had the court transcripts of the hearings that led to the evictions.



Jean Barman

More than 50 people were dispossessed from land that their ancestors had lived on for generations. It wasn't a "park" to them, it was their home.

Dr. Barman's book ends: "Stanley Park's Secret has another purpose apart from telling stories, as important as they are. The goal is to reclaim a place in the history of Vancouver, British Columbia and Canada for the forgotten families. Within Stanley Park the Aboriginal villages of Whoi Whoi at Lumberman's Arch and Chaythoos near Prospect Point need appropriate signage, as do Brockton Point and the nearby graveyard where families of all backgrounds were laid to rest. Kanaka Ranch at the foot of Denman Street similarly needs to be recognized. Not only were families dispossessed, the memory of them was erased. Only when the sites are returned to our collective memory will Stanley Park belong to all of us."

Vancouver Historical Society - Leadership, 2005 - 2006 (elected May 26, 2005)

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