

Vancouver Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

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A Vancouver Romance: John and Ruth Morton April Speaker: Bruce A. Woods

Most Vancouverites know John Morton (1834-1912) as being one of the Three Greenhorns who settled in 1862 on the claim now known as Vancouver's West End. What most don't know is the lifelong romance between John and his wife



Ruth and John Morton

Photo: City of Vancouver Archives AM336

Ruth Mounts (1834-1939), now memorialized by the Ruth Morton Baptist Church, which author and former minister of the church,

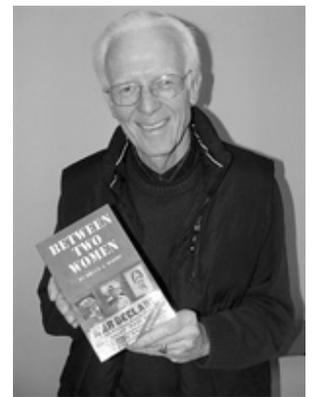
Bruce A. Woods has spent 40 years researching.

Ruth was Morton's second wife for in 1877 Morton had gone from his West End claim to England and married Blackfoot native Jane Ann Bailey;

however, in 1881, after their return, she died in childbirth. In 1882 Morton purchased a farm in Mission and shortly afterwards, a Mission storekeeper and matchmaker of sorts, sent a letter to the Mounts family in Iowa to see if their 34 year old daughter would be interested in the 48-year-old Morton. She took a chance and when she arrived it was love at first sight. In 1882 they were married in New Westminster and honeymooned in Granville. At that time Morton wanted to show his wife the white sands of English Bay on one side of his old claim but the leaky boat they garnered in Gastown proved unseaworthy. They had to be content to sit on the beach all day watching the pigs rooting for clams and crows picking up the leftovers. Even though they farmed in Mission, they kept up contact with the Vancouver area. They would take the stage coach from New Westminster

along the bumpy corduroy road to the township of Hastings, then considered a recreational area for the inhabitants of the Royal City. In 1888 John and Ruth went to England where Ruth stayed overseeing their children's education for four years.

In 1899 the Mortons set up housekeeping at 1151 Denman Street. As Baptists, John Morton put money towards establishing the First Baptist Church at Burrard and Nelson in 1910-11. Short before he died in 1912, Morton also agreed to fund a Baptist church on East 27th Avenue in the name of his wife and love of his life, Ruth Morton.



**Author
Bruce A. Woods**

Now retired, Rev. Bruce A. Woods, author of *Between Two Women* and *Between Two Worlds* is eagerly awaiting the printing of his next book *A Vancouver Love Story: The Legacy of John and Ruth Morton*.

Bruce M. Watson

Next Meeting: 7:30 pm, Thursday, April 26, 2012 at Museum of Vancouver

Preznotes

We are quickly approaching the end of the current executive term. The executive acts as the nominating committee to ensure a full slate of candidates is offered to the membership at the AGM. If you are interested in serving on the executive for the upcoming 2012-2013 season, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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Accompanying this issue of the newsletter, is a very important survey for our members.

It is very important that each member of the Society respond. I am asking you to please take a few minutes to answer this questionnaire as soon as possible.

We have tried to keep the questions to a minimum while still covering a wide range of activities and issues. We have tried to make the response options simple. We have done our best to make it as easy as possible for you to give the leadership team your thoughts.

Due to the effort and complexity required to track both paper and online responses to ensure accuracy in the results, and to set up a survey online (which is frankly beyond my limited capabilities), we have opted to keep this survey paper-based alone, without offering a way to respond online. I hope you will understand and forgive this inconvenience.

There are two ways to return this survey anonymously: by mailing it to our post office box or by dropping it off at the April 26, 2012 monthly meeting. (If you are unconcerned about total anonymity, you can scan your response and email it to me personally at the address listed below. It will not be identifiable after tallied.)

Again, this is very important in determining our future direction, and will offer a great deal of insight into your thoughts. Your Society needs your input, and I am asking you to fill out and return the enclosed survey now.

Scott Anderson, President
sanderson@vancouver-historical-society.ca

Saving the Heather Pavilion

There is no better example of a true heritage building in Vancouver than the Heather Pavilion — the original structure at the heart of today's Vancouver General Hospital complex.

Vancouver's first resident architect George Grant created the imposing granite building in the Italianate Style and in accordance with the Beaux Art school of design. It faced north with an elegant driveway leading through gardens from its main entrance to West 10th Avenue.

With its four towers, it was undoubtedly one of the city's outstanding landmarks when it opened with 47 patients on January 8th, 1906. But as the years passed, new hospital buildings and additions gradually hid the Heather Pavilion from sight.

Eventually, threatened with demolition, the owners and the City of Vancouver agreed in 2003 to designate it as a heritage building and to "adaptively reuse the 1906 Heather Pavilion in a park context." Since then several of the surrounding additions have been removed so the building can now be seen again for the first time in 60 years.

Much of the impetus for preservation has come from the Heather Heritage Society, a non-profit organization closely linked to the VGH Nurses Alumnae. The society lobbied the City to save the building, then co-funded heritage historian Don Luxton's award-winning *Vancouver General Hospital 100 Years of Care and Service* and recently donated \$15,000 to establish a Heather Pavilion Preservation Fund with VGH and UBC Hospital Foundation.

For more information, visit: **www.heatherheritagesociety.com**. The Heather Heritage Society AGM (with Michael Kluckner as speaker) is on April 29th, 2pm at the VGH&UBC Hospital Foundation 855 W 12th Ave.

Andrew Pottinger

Welcome New & Returning VHS Members

Maureen Charron

Mary Gavan

Thank you VHS Members and Friends

We thank the VHS members and friends who have generously contributed \$360 in February to the Vancouver Historical Society.

Historical Federation Conference

This year's British Columbia Historical Federation Conference will be held May 3rd to 5th in Campbell River. Two workshops on May 3rd between 9:00am and 4:00pm are part of the conference. Register today.

WORKSHOP 1: PHOTO COLLECTIONS SHARE THE TREASURE

An overview of the history of photographs and photographers, conservation concerns and methods, photo interpretation and how to manage your collection. Family history consultant Brenda L. Smith will present: Photographs and Photographers: The Evolution Of Image Technology, Conserve The Treasure: What Photographs Need From Us, Windows To The Past: Interpret The Photo's Story, and Format The Future: Manage Your Photographic Resource.

WORKSHOP 2: TAKING YOUR STORY TO PRINT and PANEL

The day includes a four-hour presentation focused on the practicalities of moving from research to publication. In the afternoon workshop participants will be joined by community members for a panel to consider the variety of choices and experiences in the publishing process. Campbell River author and publisher Jocelyn Reekie of Peregrin Publishing will present: getting a manuscript ready, editing and design options, and choosing from the range of publishing choices available.

PANEL—TAKING YOUR STORY TO PRINT

Community members are invited to join workshop participants for a panel. Moderator Jean Wilson, formerly of UBC Press will lead discussion of the variety of choices and experiences that authors and publishers can encounter in taking their stories to print.

Cost for each full-day program:

- \$40 for members of BCHF member organizations
- \$50 for non-members
- \$5 Panel Presentation only

Lunch and refreshments are included in the registration fee. Register using the main conference registration form and payment method.

See the BC History website at www.bchistory.ca and look for 2012 Conference or call 604-466-2636.

Upcoming Speakers & Events

The VHS invites everyone (including non-members) to attend our monthly talks. The talks are free and are held at the Museum of Vancouver, 1100 Chestnut Street (close to Vanier Park) at 7:30 pm on the fourth Thursday of every month except June, July, August, December).

Thursday, May 24, 2012 - 7:30pm

Vanishing Vancouver: The Last 25 Years

Speaker: Michael Kluckner

In 1990, Michael Kluckner's *Vanishing Vancouver* documented disappearing buildings in the city, illustrated with his own artwork, vintage photos and colour postcards. His just-published book focuses not only on historic houses but on the apartments, gardens, shops and theatres that are threatened by the changing city, analyzing why some have survived while others have not.

Watch this space for news of our next series of talks starting in September 2012.

Titanic and Vancouver continued from Page 4

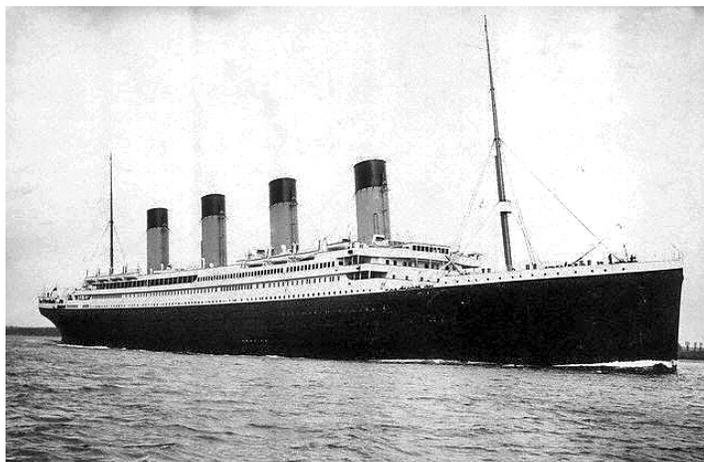
America when she read of "a great shipwreck on a sea — not on a lake or river — in the middle of April between the 11th and 15th with great loss of life."

Vancouver's Mayor James Findlay asked for flags to be flown at half-mast and a large public memorial service was held at the Vancouver Opera House on Sunday afternoon, April 21st. The Opera House was on the west side of Granville between Robson and Georgia.

The *Titanic's* wreckage would be located 2.5 miles below the ocean's surface on September 1st, 1985, a little over 73 years after it sank. Many subsequent underwater expeditions have since been made to the ship.

Jim McGraw with thanks to Andrew Martin

RMS *Titanic* and Vancouver



RMS *Titanic* leaving Europe on her maiden voyage.

In the first weeks of April 100 years ago, few Vancouverites probably paid much attention to the maiden voyage of a passenger liner on the Southampton-New York City route. By the second half of the month most everyone in the city had heard of the White Star Line's RMS *Titanic*.

The 882-foot long *Titanic* struck an iceberg in the frigid North Atlantic about 375 miles south of Newfoundland a few minutes before midnight on Sunday, April 14th, 1912.

Although news of the *Titanic*'s collision had been received by the next day, Vancouver's *The World* newspaper still had optimistic headlines and sub-headings like: "No Lives Lost" — "Passengers transferred to Cunard's *Carpathia*" — "*Titanic* on her way to Halifax with assistance."

By Tuesday, the full extent of the tragedy was becoming apparent. Of the 1,517 lost lives, there were connections to Vancouver. Thomas McCaffry, manager of the Union Bank of Vancouver was one of the lost souls. McCaffry had been ill for some time and left Vancouver in January to recuperate under sunnier and warmer climes in Europe and Egypt. He was returning on the *Titanic*. His longtime friend, Hugo Ross who had cared for him on the trip, was also believed to have perished.

A "Canadian moving picture operator" also died according to Vancouver newspapers. He was in fact an American, William Harbeck of Seattle. Harbeck had been employed by the White Star Line to film life aboard the new *Titanic*. Harbeck today is noted for filming the earliest surviving movie footage of Vancouver street scenes from a streetcar five years earlier in 1907.

While not a Vancouverite, Charles Melville Hays, could have had a great influence on the future of Vancouver. Hays was the Montreal-based President of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway then being built between Winnipeg and Prince Rupert. Hays wanted Prince Rupert to rival Vancouver as a port city that was one day's sailing closer to Asia. The dream died with Hays.

Another Vancouver resident was seemingly saved by an almanac prophesy. Mrs. Frison of Hastings Street West delayed her return from England to North

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Vancouver Historical Society Leadership: 2011 - 2012 (Elected May 26, 2011)

EXECUTIVE

President	Scott Anderson
Vice President (Programs)	Bruce Watson
Treasurer	Kristen Wong
Recording Secretary	Jean Wilson
Director (Memberships)	Elizabeth Hawkins
Director	Kellan Higgins
Director	Jean Mann
Director	Robert McDonald
Director (Newsletter Editor)	Jim McGraw

APPOINTED POSITIONS

Webmaster	Quasar Data Management
Archivist	Elizabeth Hawkins
Info Line	Bruce Watson

CONTACT INFORMATION

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