

Vancouver Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

ISSN 0042 - 2487

Vol. 44 No. 5

February 2005

The Black Community of Strathcona and Hogan's Alley in Vancouver

Speaker: Wayde Compton

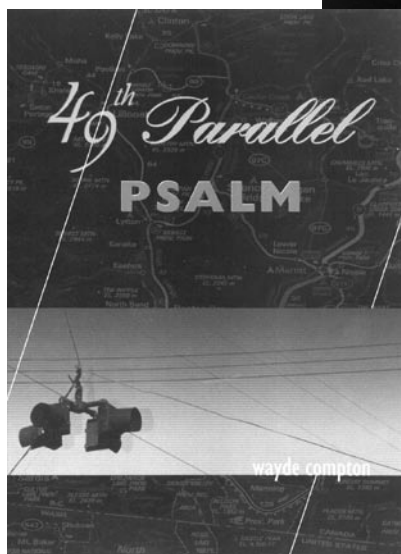
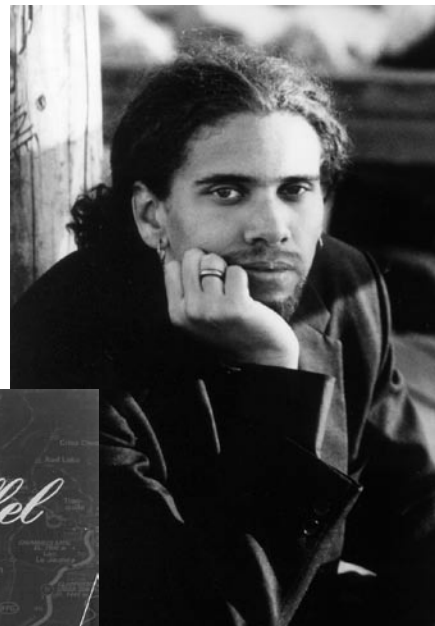
'Hogan's Alley' was the local, unofficial name for Park Lane, an alley that ran through the south-western corner of Strathcona in Vancouver's East End during the first six decades of the twentieth century. Hogan's Alley and the surrounding area was an ethnically diverse neighbourhood during this era, home to many Italian, Chinese, and Japanese Canadians. Significantly, a number of black families, black businesses, and the city's only black church, the African Methodist Episcopal Fountain Chapel, were located there too. As such, Hogan's Alley was the first and last neighbourhood in Vancouver with a concentrated black population.

Most of Hogan's Alley was destroyed around 1970 by the construction of the Georgia Viaduct, the first phase of a planned interurban freeway intended to wipe out all of Hogan's Alley and to cut nearby Chinatown in half. The freeway was stopped by Strathcona community activities, but not before Hogan's Alley was effectively obliterated.

Our speaker, Wayde Compton, has been researching Hogan's Alley for several years. Interviewing members of the black community who were part of the community, Mr. Compton's examination of this historically significant Vancouver neighbourhood reveals the central role that the black community played in East Vancouver in the

early decades of the last century. The Vancouver Historical Society is pleased to present this program during Black History Month.

Wayde Compton is the editor of *Bluesprint: Black British Columbia Literature and Culture*, published by Arsenal Pulp Press and author of *49th Parallel Psalm*. His most recent book is *Performance Bond*, in which his poems resist the globalization of black culture.



ABOVE: Wayde Compton;
LEFT: His book, *49th
Parallel Psalm*.

Thursday, February 24th, 2005, at 7:30 pm in the Vancouver Museum

Preznotes

Let me begin with some personal history. As a relative newcomer to Vancouver and eager to learn more about my city, I joined the Vancouver Historical Society in the autumn of 1999. Early in 2000, I noted in the newsletter that the treasurer's position was vacant, and I thought, "Gee, maybe I could do that." I talked to then-president Adrian Clark, and in May of that year I was elected treasurer. Three years later I became president.

It's been a great ride, which I hope will continue a while longer. As a member of the VHS Executive, I've shared in shaping the Society's priorities and helped to implement its varied programs. I've had the fun of working with a talented and dedicated group of leaders. And along the way, I've learned a whole lot of Vancouver history!

So why do I tell you this? Because the door is wide open for some of you to join the VHS 'inner circle' and share the fun! We'll be electing two or three new members to the Executive at our next AGM in May. The chief qualifications are an interest in Vancouver history, commitment to attend our first-Thursday Executive meetings at the Museum, and willingness to help in the program areas of your choosing. We'll also be looking for a program chair (a new or continuing member of the Executive) and a newsletter editor.

How about it? If you find yourself thinking, "Gee, maybe I could do that," please speak with me or any member of the Executive. We want to finalize our slate of nominees in the next few weeks, and you could be among them. It's a great ride!

**Paul Flucke, President : (604) 732-7742;
email: paulflucke@shaw.ca**

New Members

Welcome to our newest members: Cameron Cathcart and Hong Leng Chiam of Vancouver.

Come Celebrate

Vancouver's Birthday

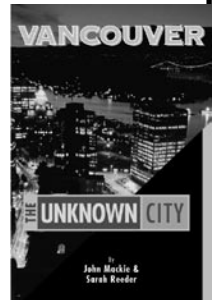
Sunday April 10, 2004



The Annual Incorporation Day Lunch will be held on Sunday, April 10th, 2005 at the University Golf Club, 5185 University Boulevard at 12 noon.

Our guest speaker this year is John Mackie, a writer with the *Vancouver Sun*. His love of Vancouver's past and his insight into the city's historical images are a fine way to celebrate Vancouver's incorporation as a city.

Tickets for the lunch for members and friends are \$25.00 each, up to March 26th; \$30.00 until March 31st, the absolute deadline. You can buy your tickets at the February and March monthly VHS meetings (the fourth Thursday of the month), or you can order them from Elizabeth Hawkins, 3626 West 1st Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V6R 1H2 (tel. 604-737-8045). Please enclose a cheque to the VHS with your request for tickets.



VHS Logo: A Time for Renewal?

The Vancouver Historical Society was founded nearly 70 years ago. To accompany that foundation, the society's members of the day adopted the VHS logo. The logo contains design features that are typical of the 1930s (scrolled banners and text) and several graphic images to symbolize the City's setting and early history (train engine, logs, Lions, etc.). The logo has served the society well for nearly seven decades.

At its January 2005 meeting, the executive of the VHS authorized the creation of a Logo Committee. Executive member-at-large Wayne Norton and newsletter editor Kathleen McKinnon have volunteered to serve on the committee. The intention is to examine the philosophical basis of the logo, to determine whether or not a new logo is needed, and, if it is, to recommend to the society a design that will carry us to our 70th birthday in 2007 and beyond.

Members will be consulted throughout the process. At the moment, the committee needs volunteers to join Wayne and Kathleen as their work begins. A first meeting will be scheduled once the committee members have been determined. Interested? Please contact any executive member to volunteer.

Historica Fair 2005

VHS members who visited or adjudicated at Vancouver's first Historica Fair last May will surely remember the event fondly. Nearly 100 young Vancouver students presented their historical projects and brought them to life in a way that it seems only the young can do. The VHS was proud to support last year's event and is pleased to be able to offer both moral and financial support again this year.

If you would like to witness the remarkable interest of today's elementary students in history, please consider visiting the Vancouver Museum on May 6th or May 7th.

We need volunteers again this year to adjudicate the students' projects. If you would like to be an adjudicator at this year's Historica Fair, you will certainly be welcome and will join approximately 30 others at the Museum on Friday, May 6th. No experience is necessary. You can attend a training session in April or be briefed quickly the morning of the Fair. You will not work alone, but as a member of a team of three. Contact Wayne Norton (604 734-7858 or wnorton1@shaw.ca) for more information.

A Tribute to John Bovey

Archivist of British Columbia

Members of the *Vancouver Historical Society* were saddened to read the news of the passing of John Bovey January 12th, 2005. John was a Vancouver native and a graduate of the University of British Columbia. Before returning home to British Columbia to the post of Provincial Archivist, John served as Archivist of the Northwest Territories and then of the province of Manitoba. His great coup, one of enormous significance to Canadian as well as Manitoban history, was securing the transfer from London to Winnipeg of the archives of the Hudson's Bay Company.

John had a regular spot on CBC radio. Both his anecdotes and his more extensive remarks in these broadcasts and on many other occasions did more to arouse public interest in our history than more formal writings on the topic. In addition to the professional help he provided, many of us will fondly recall John's distinctive voice, his lively enthusiasm, and his warm, engaging manner.

- *Neil Sutherland*

Historic Film Footage

The 2nd Annual Home Movie Day is set for Sunday, February 20, 2005 at Aberthau House, West Point Grey Community Centre. Come and watch historic Vancouver footage all day. Bring in your home movies for inspection, evaluation, and screening. This event is a partnership by the Vancouver Park Board, with the CBC and Vancouver City Archives involved. Contact Megan Stuart-Stubbs at 604-713-1861 for more information.

Coming Up

Upcoming VHS Speakers

Thursday, March 24, 2005, 7:30 pm - Backstage Vancouver: Entertainment Legends in our City with Red Robinson and Greg Potter.

Red Robinson was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1995 and the Canadian Broadcast Hall of Fame in 1997. Greg Potter has covered pop culture for *The Vancouver Sun*, *The Georgia Straight*, and *The Vancouver Courier*.

BCHF News

The 2005 BCHF Annual conference in Kelowna entitled **Our History, Our Heritage, Celebrating Kelowna's 100th Anniversary**, will be held Thursday, May 12 to Sunday May 15th, 2005. The free pre-conference workshops on Thursday will concern different aspects of grant proposals with particular emphasis on the *Personal Information and Privacy Act* (PIPA).

Registration forms and conference information will be included in the next issue of *British Columbia History* which John Atkin, the new editor of the BCHF journal, promises will be sent, along with the BCHF Newsletter, to members before the end of February. Register for the conference before March 15th to get a discount. Registration forms can also be downloaded from the BCHF web site www.bchistory.ca.



Sunday, June 5, 2005 10am ~5pm

order securely online at
www.vancouverheritagefoundation.org

or by calling 604.264.9642

Tickets \$35.00

including gst & mailing of guidebooks

The Vancouver Heritage Foundation
844 West Hastings St. Vancouver, BC V6C 1C8

Chinese Canadians in the First and Second World Wars: January Speaker: Judy Maxwell

Reviewed by: Chuck Davis

On January 27, in the Joyce Walley room of the Vancouver Museum, Judy Maxwell, one of the directors of the Vancouver Chinese Canadian Military Museum (and a new member of the VHS executive), gave an illustrated talk to a packed VHS meeting on Chinese Canadians in World Wars I and II: Their Vancouver Connection. This was an eye-opening look at the distinguished service these men and women performed, and the hurdles they had to overcome in offering to fight for us.

The RCAF had no people of Chinese descent in their ranks until 1942, three years after the war had started. The Canadian Navy had about 10 Chinese sailors. It wasn't for lack of volunteers; the Army grudgingly, and belatedly, admitted Chinese recruits.

No Chinese Canadians were drafted in either world war: they were all volunteers, and many of them served (with distinction and bravery) behind enemy lines in the Pacific War. It was the Pacific War, in fact, that opened up the greatest opportunities for Chinese servicemen and women. Lord Mountbatten, for example, created "Force 136," comprised of Chinese Canadian soldiers. These soldiers underwent rigorous training in India and infiltrated behind enemy lines where they were able to blend in. (Especially notable in that field was Bill Chong, born in Vancouver in 1911, and the subject of a Vancouver Sun story November 11, 2002.)



Ironically, Judy Maxwell, whose mother is Chinese, is, on her father's side, the great-granddaughter of George Ritchie Maxwell, the first Liberal MP to represent Vancouver . . . and who was anti-Chinese! Judy told us that her great-grandfather lobbied Prime Minister John A. Macdonald to raise the already high head tax on Chinese living in Canada. (The tax reached \$500 per person in a day when \$100 could buy you a lot in Strathcona.)

There was a small coterie of Chinese Canadian veterans at the talk, including Frank Wong, who fought at Normandy, Willie Chong, a member of Force 136, and others. A member of the big audience asked these gentlemen to stand, and they did, and got sustained and heartfelt applause. That was a thrilling moment.

Judy Maxwell's work peels back another layer of Vancouver's history, and adds long-neglected names to the city's roll of honour. The museum she has helped to administer contributes to that work. The Chinese Canadian Military Museum is in the Chinese Cultural Centre complex at 555 Columbia Street, Vancouver. The hours are: Tuesday to Sundays, 11:00 am to 5:00 pm. For more information call 604-687-0282. The website is at www.ccmuseum.bc.ca.

ABOVE: Chinese Canadian Force 136 in India.

Vancouver Historical Society - Executive, 2004 - 2005 (elected May 27, 2004)

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