

# Vancouver Historical Society

## NEWSLETTER

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### Musqueam - First People of Vancouver

*February Speaker: Larry Grant*



*Larry Grant*

Musqueam people have used and occupied their traditional territory — much of what is now Vancouver and the surrounding areas — for several thousand years. They were descended from the cultural group known as the Coast Salish Tribe.

We will learn more from this month's speaker Larry Grant who is of Chinese and Musqueam ancestry. His Chinese name is Hong Lai Hing and his Chinese father, being a non-Aboriginal person, was not allowed to live on the Reserve. Larry's father was a vegetable farmer who delivered his produce between Musqueam and Chinatown. For forty years, Larry went by his Chinese name as people thought him as Chinese.

Today Larry is an Elder who is an adjunct professor at the UBC Faculty of Arts and an Elder in Resident of the First Nation House of Learning. He is presently assisting in revitalizing the Musqueam language and co-teaching the introductory Musqueam language course.

Teucher and Susan J. Blake in January 2004 at the meeting of the Society for the Study of the Indigenous Languages of the Americas at MIT, Boston, Massachusetts and again in August 2004 at the 39<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Salish and Neighbouring Languages hosted by Squamish First Nation.

A second research paper by the authors entitled "I Belong to Musqueam: Language, Memory and Identity in Aboriginal Life Narratives" was presented at the Interdisciplinary Conference on Narrative Matters at St. Thomas University, Fredericton, N.B.

In the past eight years, Larry has devoted his life to the revival of the Musqueam language and made presentations at linguistic conferences in Boston, Washington, Frankfurt, Hamburg and New Zealand.

He has officiated in events such as the visit of Governor General Adrienne Clarkson at the Chan Centre, Captain George Vancouver Day in 2007, the visit of California Governor Schwarzenegger and the launch of the new B.C. Ferry in

Germany. Larry Grant also participated in a Vancouver City Hall initiative on the greening of Carrall Street called Storyscape where he tells his family history.



*LEFT: Larry Grant with his parents and family.*

**Next Meeting: Thursday, February 28 at 7:30 pm at the Vancouver Museum**

# PREZNOTES

As we glide into our 72nd year of VHS existence, your Executive has been moving with the times. Our cyber-age website has meant that we now post our newsletter on-line. Since in the past receiving a mailed newsletter was one privilege of membership, we have decided that as compensation, the society should offer at least two free field trips a year for members only. As well, since attendance at speaker events has climbed, we are reserving the first five rows of seating for members who arrive before 7:20 p.m.

This year is also significant as it is the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment as a colony of the mainland portion of the province of British Columbia. It is also the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Simon Fraser's journey down to the area around the mouth of the river that would eventually bear his name. Numerous other anniversaries are being celebrated. With this in mind, your Executive is currently exchanging historical ideas with a B.C.-based company that is celebrating a significant anniversary so that local history can be front and centre.

With 2010 just around the corner, we additionally have notified the Olympic Organizing Committee that we are free and available should they wish to reveal historical aspects of Vancouver to the world. After all, it is the *Vancouver Olympics*.

To highlight then-and-now 1907 Vancouver history, the City Reflections sub-group is putting the finishing touches to the DVD of the re-shot Harbeck film and the DVD should be ready some time in May.

Those outside the Society have come to appreciate our efforts. A generous and appreciative response came from the Hamber Foundation, which is assisting us in the installation of our two historical interpretation signs in Stanley and Devonian parks.

As I said, we are moving with the times.

*Bruce M. Watson, VHS President*

## Welcome New Member

Carolyn Affleck

## Incorporation Day Luncheon Speaker Announced

Tickets to this year's Incorporation Day Luncheon have barely been on sale and they are already selling briskly. Be sure to buy your tickets to what promises to be an entertaining event.

The annual Luncheon will be held on Sunday April 6th, 2008 at the University Golf Club, 5185 University Boulevard at 12 Noon.



*Stephen Hume  
(University of Victoria photo)*

Tickets for the Luncheon for members and friends are \$30.00 each. You can buy your tickets at the January, February or March monthly VHS meetings (the fourth Thursday of the month) or you can order them from Elizabeth Hawkins, 3626 West 1st Avenue, Vancouver, V6R 1H2 (tel.: 604-737-8045). Please enclose a cheque made out to the VHS with your request for tickets.

This year's special guest and speaker will multi award-winning journalist, Stephen Hume. He has been with the Vancouver Sun since 1989.

Stephen has also received awards for his six books, which have covered poetry, essays and natural history.

Last year, Stephen wrote a fascinating series of articles on the exploits of Simon Fraser and his role in the founding of modern British Columbia. This is the bicentennial year of Fraser's explorations of the river that now bears his name.

During the course of his research, Stephen searched through more than 300 documents and texts, traveled across the country logging more than 20,000 kilometres by road, river and air. He traveled in everything from canoes to jet boats and on foot to detail the life and travels of this largely unsung explorer.

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## History at the Dump

Zero Waste Vancouver is working on a video about waste in Vancouver. Anyone with stories to tell about the old dump on Kerr Road, in False Creek Flats, or about any other waste removal in Vancouver (burying, composting, burning) or about gardening in Vancouver please contact [zerowastevancouver@gmail.com](mailto:zerowastevancouver@gmail.com).

For further information about Zero Waste go to [www.zerowastevancouver.org](http://www.zerowastevancouver.org)

Donna Jean (DJ) MacKinnon 604-876-2463 [www.djmackinnon.com](http://www.djmackinnon.com)

## British Columbia Historical Federation's **Annual Conference** at New Westminster, May 8-11, 2008

This year's British Columbia Historical Federation annual conference will be held at New Westminster, May 8-11.

Full Conference Registration includes the opening reception, two lunches, banquet dinner, walking tour and a field trip to Fort Langley.

It's \$175 for the early bird registration if registered by March 15, 2008. After that, it's \$200 regular registration with an April 15, 2008 deadline.

Partial registration is also available. For details and registration forms, visit [www.bchistory.ca/conferences/2008/Registration2008.pdf](http://www.bchistory.ca/conferences/2008/Registration2008.pdf) or call 604-274-4383.

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### Stanley Park Experts

The Vancouver Park Board is formulating a plan to erect several interpretive signs (e.g. historical, geological, botanical, etc) around Stanley Park and has asked the VHS if we have any members who might be interested in identifying and providing input on settlement era points of interest (e.g. 9 O'clock gun, lighthouses, Brockton Cricket ground, etc.) within the park.

Some are already covered but historically interesting settlement era points of interest could include lesser known aspects, which have become obscured over time. For example, who knows about the history of the gun emplacements? The WWI observation points? The logging trails?

VHS input would involve two stages. Their first would be to identify points of interest and the second would be to provide historical detail from the knowledge base we have within the membership. Anyone interested in contributing or being part of a committee?

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### Doing More with the VHS

The VHS is always looking for volunteers to serve on committees or on a future Executive board. If you feel you would like to volunteer or have questions, please feel free to approach any of the Executive at the next speaker's Meeting. You also may also leave your name with us via our website ([Vancouver-Historical-Society.ca](http://Vancouver-Historical-Society.ca)) or by calling the information line at 604-878-9140. If, on principle you wish to be traditional, you may send your name to: VHS, P. O. Box 3071, Vancouver, B. C., V6B 3X6

## Upcoming Speakers & Events

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

Thursday, February 28, 2008, 7:30 pm

*Musqueam — First People of Vancouver*

**Speaker: Larry Grant**

Discover how the Musqueam people have used and occupied their traditional territory for several thousand years. This territory includes much of what is now Vancouver and the surrounding area. Elder Larry Grant describes the rich history of the Musqueam.

Thursday, March 27, 2008, 7:30 pm

*Inside the H. Y. Louie Family*

**Speaker: Willis Louie**

From humble beginnings as wholesale grocers in Chinatown, the Louie family went on to own Independent Groceries Alliance (IGA) and eventually also London Drugs. The evening promises to be an intriguing glimpse into one family's history, which is very much tied to that of Vancouver.

Thursday, April 24, 2008, 7:30 pm

*History of the Vancouver Post Office*

**Speaker: Jim Bain**

From 1869 when postmaster Maximilian Michaud first cancelled outgoing letters at his Burrard Inlet post office to the mail sorting machinery of today's giant Vancouver Mail Processing Plant, the local post office has gone through many changes. A former Divisional Manager sorts through its colourful history.

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### Historica Help

Historica is looking for volunteers to be adjudicators of student presentations at the May 2-3, 2008 Historica Fair. Those interested, please contact Sidney Madden at 604-738-3335.

# The Italian Community in Vancouver

January Speaker: Ray Culos

It was only when Ray Culos' grandfather came to Vancouver in 1910 from a rice growing area of Italy, did he eat his first dish of spaghetti. Such was the varied experience of Italian immigrants to Vancouver at the turn of the century. Often drifting west for warmer climes, they regrouped trying to reconcile their collective Italian and Canadian identities.

One early Italian who drifted this way was Giuseppe Guasparri who came here via New York. There when landing, the 22-year-old was recruited into the U.S. Army as "John Lewis". At the end of the U.S. Civil war, and enticed by the stories of gold across the continent, "John" began work at Hastings Mill in 1872. After moving North to trade liquor for furs with the First Nations People, he was able to retire comfortably to a plot of land. In the 1880s, one step ahead of the Northwest Mounted Police, he returned to Italy, married a much younger woman and came back to Vancouver in 1890 where he died and was buried.



At last month's talk, Culos, himself a third generation Canadian, displayed a picture of his maternal grandfather's family proudly posing all 17 members of the family in front of Stanley Park's hollow tree (*above*.) Similar immigrant portraits have found their way into thousands of family albums.

The first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw an influx of Italians and the first fraternal organization, the Sons of Italy Society sprang up in January 1905 to oversee the welfare of Vancouver Italians. One of its co-founders was Angelo Calori, the builder of the Europe Hotel. Around this time, sculptor Carlo Marega arrived and carved his own artistic path outside the aegis of Italian organizations. Meanwhile, fellow sculptor Alemando Fabri, chose to align himself with the fortunes of an emerging Italy.

Although various Italian organizations sprang up, it was the

Circolo Giulio Giordani pro-fascist club that, by demanding that members swear their blood and allegiance to Mussolini, got its Italian members into trouble in 1940. Consequently 40 men were arrested in the Vancouver area and taken east of the Rockies for internment although none were found to have committed any subversive acts against Canada. To counter this organization, second generation Canadian, Angelo Branca, formed the Vancouver Canadian-Italian War Vigilance Association, thus dividing the Italian Community. A bust of Mussolini remains in the Vancouver

Archives, a trophy of an RCMP raid of the Italian Consulate's office near the beginning of the war.

Branca, however, excelled not only in boxing but also in law, losing only two of the 61 murder cases he defended. Known for defending everyone from gamblers to cabinet ministers, Branca was appointed to the Supreme Court of British Columbia and at his death, a statue of Christopher Columbus was erected in his honour. The statue mysteriously

disappeared and just as mysteriously re-appeared years later at the Italian gardens at the PNE.

Today, the Italian Community Centre is the focal point for those wanting to maintain ties with tradition. However, since there has been no significant influx of Italians into Canada during the last few decades, the Centre is going to have to adapt to new conditions, just as the Italians have done for over a century.

Speaker Ray Culos left a lasting impression of the Vancouver Italian experience with his description of Little Italy and of Italian immigrant women singing in unison traditional Italian songs while going about their daily chores. Thanks to Ray Culos for his engaging talk.

**Bruce Watson**

## Vancouver Historical Society - Leadership, 2007 - 2008 (elected May 24, 2007)

### EXECUTIVE:

President	Bruce Watson
Vice President (Programs)	Larry Wong
Treasurer	Paul Flucke
Recording Secretary	Sidney Madden
Director	Scott Anderson
Director	Chuck Davis
Director (Membership)	Elizabeth Hawkins
Director (Newsletter Editor)	Jim McGraw
Director	Lisa Smedman

### APPOINTED POSITIONS

Webmaster	Quasar Data Mgmt.
Archivist	Elizabeth Hawkins
Info Line	Barbara Coles
Newsletter Mailing	Scott Anderson
Webmail	Paul Flucke

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Vancouver Historical Society Information Line: 604-878-9140  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 3071 Vancouver, BC, V6B 3X6  
Website: [www.vancouver-historical-society.ca](http://www.vancouver-historical-society.ca)  
Newsletter Submissions: [jmcgraw@vancouver-historical-society.ca](mailto:jmcgraw@vancouver-historical-society.ca)