

Vancouver Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

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From Opium Dens to Safe Injection Sites: A History of Drug Use in Vancouver

speaker: Catherine Carstairs

We begin our Winter 2004 season with a presentation by Dr. Catherine Carstairs of UBC. In her talk, Catherine will take us deeply into the tragic and controversial sides of Vancouver's history.

For most of the twentieth century, Vancouver has been the largest centre of drug use in Canada. She will describe the earliest stages of drug use in Vancouver, examine the impact of Canada's drug laws, and explain why drug use has continued, albeit in different forms, up to the present day.

She will also address the transition from opium use to heroin use, and more recently, to polydrug use and the changing impact of drug laws on the lives of drug users.



Dr. Catherine Carstairs is a professor in the History Department at the University of British Columbia. She is finishing a book on drug use in Canada between 1920 and 1961 and has also published work on doping in sport and on international drug control.

She has published in the *Journal of Canadian Studies*, *Addiction Research and Theory*, and *Contemporary Drug Problems* and is beginning a project on the history of health food in Canada.

PHOTOS: The two photos on the left are from the Emily Murphy book, *The Black Candle* (1922) and includes an article Murphy wrote on the "grave menace" of drugs. Above is a 1900 photograph of an opium den.



Thursday, January 22, 2004, at 7:30 pm, Upper Joyce Walley Learning Centre, Vancouver Museum

Preznotes

Becoming History?

In a book of old Vancouver photos, I find a shot, dated 1904, of pedestrians on Hastings Street in front of the newly opened Woodward's Department Store.

Striding toward the camera is a man in a black suit and black bowler hat who looks to be about my age. I wonder: Did it occur to him that a century later, he might be immortalized in a history book? And then: Could I sneak into Vancouver history in that same accidental way?

Not likely! But in a sense, when the events of 2004 are recorded, we'll all be there — not pictured, but present just the same as participants in the making of history. It gets me to thinking of events that could make it worth remembering.

Begin with Woodwards. Could it be that, a century after its opening, 2004 will mark the old building's resurrection to a new and very different role in our city's life?

How about False Creek? In the 1980's it morphed from railroad yard to Expo '86. Will 2004 finally see the end of its long transition from Expo to glitzy glass and steel highrise condos? One wonders how those towers will look in 2054 and whether, in 2104, they will still be there.

On the political scene: After decades of dickering, will 2004 be the year in which Vancouver's City Council moves to a ward system? If so, how will it affect the city, and how will future generations judge it? Social concerns: This new year's chilling cold has raised concerns about Vancouver's homeless, and in April new provincial welfare cuts may bring a huge increase in homelessness. How will the city respond? Could this year bring creative change in our approach to this stubborn problem?

I'm sure you can add more ways in which all of us are making our way into Vancouver history. But here's a parting word of advice: if you want your *picture* to show up in tomorrow's history books, try walking back and forth in front of Woodward's.

Happy New Year!

Paul Flucke, President

VHS - 2

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DON'T MISS

The Incorporation Day Lunch



The Annual Incorporation Day Lunch celebrating Vancouver's birthday will be held on Sunday, April 4th, 2004, at the University Golf Club, 5185 University

Boulevard, Vancouver at 12 noon. We sincerely hope you can join us.

The speaker this year will be Dr. W. B. Chung, who has made significant contributions to the holdings of various institutions in the city, including the Vancouver Maritime Museum and the Library of the University of British Columbia. We are honoured that Dr. Chung has agreed to join us for this special day. His speech on this occasion will centre on the history of Chinese people in Vancouver.

There will be a buffet lunch and a cash bar. The #10 bus stops in front of the Golf Club on University Boulevard. There is ample parking at the club. Price for the lunch for members and friends will be \$25.00 each, up to March 26th after which it will be \$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 with your request for tickets.

YOU ARE INVITED

INCORPORATION DAY LUNCH

DATE: SUNDAY, APRIL 24

TIME: 12:00 PM

PLACE: UNIVERSITY GOLF CLUB

TIME FOR A CHANGE?

A new name for our quarterly journal?

by Ron Welwood

(Excerpted from the Newsletter October 2003, *British Columbia Historical Federation*)

The *Newsletter* is meant to be exactly what it is - an information sheet containing news of interest to the members of the British Columbia Historical Federation. News should be as current as possible, so this *Newsletter* will be issued bimonthly and, if warranted, perhaps more frequently in the future. In order to avoid confusion between this *Newsletter* and the Federation's flagship quarterly, *British Columbia Historical News*, it may be appropriate to consider a new title for the quarterly journal.Why not emphasize this focus by changing the title to ***British Columbia History***?

The name change from **British Columbia Historical News** to ***British Columbia History*** was approved at the Sept. 20, 2003 Board Meeting where it was recommended that comments be solicited from the membership. Society members are asked to share their thoughts with the Board on the name change and please forward them to:

Jacqueline Gresko,
President
British Columbia Historical Federation
5931 Sandpiper Court
Richmond, B. C. V7E 3P8
or email j_gresko@douglas.bc.ca

What do you think?

British Columbia Historical News
British Columbia History

VHS SPEAKER SERIES

What a lineup!

Thanks to Joanne Savory for the fascinating program she has organized for VHS members and friends this winter and spring. Please join us the fourth Thursday of the month at 7:30 pm at the Vancouver Museum, 1100 Chestnut Street. Learn more about our wonderful city, meet other history buffs, and enjoy an evening out.

Thursday, January 22, 2004

- From Opium Dens to Safe Injection Sites: A History of Drug Use in Vancouver
- Speaker: Catherine Carstairs, UBC History Department.

Thursday, February 26, 2004

- A History of Kitsilano
- Speaker: John Atkins, local historian and author.

Thursday, March 25, 2004

- Dreaming in the Rain: How Vancouver became Hollywood North by Northwest
- Speaker: David Spaner, film critic, Vancouver Province.

Thursday, April 22, 2004

- Stories in Stone: A Geological Tour of Vancouver's Buildings and Monuments
- Speaker: Peter Mustard, SFU Earth Sciences & Past President of the Geological Association of Canada.

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.



Call for Artifacts & Photos of the '60s & '70s

Curator of history at the Vancouver Museum, Joan Seidl, is seeking items from the 60s & 70s for reproduction, donation & loan. Do you, or someone you know, have any of the following items:

1. Photos of social action/ protest taking place in Vancouver in the 1960s/1970s.
2. Ephemera such as posters, flyers, notices, etc. for activist groups in Vancouver in the 1960s and 1970s -(Green Peace, S.P.E.C., Protest Project 200, Stop the Freeway, Save Gastown, Anti-Vietnam, Women's Liberation, Gay Rights, etc.).
3. Photos of you and/or friends in hippie clothing or of apartments/houses with hippie-style furnishings in Vancouver.

If you can help or have suggestions for other sources, please contact Joan Seidl at the Museum at (604) 736-4431 ex. 373 or by e-mail at jseidl@vanmuseum.bc.ca.

Building the west: the early architects of B.C.:

NOVEMBER SPEAKER:

Donald Luxton

Reviewed by: Ellen Ramsay

Donald Luxton, editor and compiler of *Building the West: The Early Architects of B.C.*, was our feature speaker in November. Mr. Luxton introduced us to a few of the over 400 architects who designed and built our province between the Goldrush in 1858 and the introduction of modernism in 1937.

With the help of some 50 contributors, Mr. Luxton has produced in *Building the West: The Early Architects of B.C.* an impressive volume of architects and engineer-architects who practiced their profession in our province.

While most people have heard of Francis Rattenbury (1867-1935) and Samuel Maclure (1860-1935), many of the architects in *Building the West: The Early Architects of B.C.* were hitherto unknown or little known to BC historians. Many were eccentric individuals who turned their hand to unusual pursuits.

Donald Luxton entertained us with a few examples. John C. White (1835-1907) worked as an archi-

tect and became known for his early paintings of the colonies.

Charles Fowler, who was exceptionally proud of his military history, designed his own coffin. Richard Lewis developed a parallel profession as an undertaker. He was reportedly so depressed at one point at not being able to make his living from architecture that he took to bed convinced he was dying. He only revived, so the story goes, when he realized that one of his competitors would probably bury him.

Thomas Hooper (1857-1935) born in a medieval town in Devon, England came to Canada in 1867. He designed many commercial buildings in Victoria and Vancouver. Then when Ebenezer Robson introduced him to the Methodist community, he began designing Methodist churches in the Romanesque style.

Donald Luxton's talk showed his mastery of the dates, the characters and the details of architecture in the province. The VHS audience asked many skillful questions, each was met with a precise and thoughtful reply.



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

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