

# Vancouver Historical Society

## NEWSLETTER

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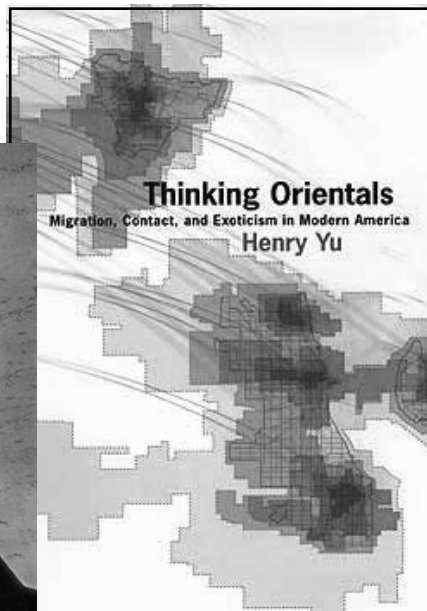
### 100-60-40-10: The Rise and Fall (and Rise Again) of Pacific Vancouver *January Speaker: Prof. Henry Yu*

Prof. Henry Yu will speak on the year 2007, which marks a series of anniversaries of watershed moments in Vancouver's relationship to Canada and the Pacific world. By charting each of these crucial moments — from the 1907 anti-Asian riots through the 1947 Citizenship Act, the 1967 Immigration Act, and the 1997 Hong Kong handover — we can re-imagine both the local history of Vancouver and its place as a global city.

This talk kicks off a year-long series of commemorations of the profound historical changes that have taken place since the city's founding.



LEFT: Prof. Henry Yu.



Prof. Henry Yu was born in Vancouver, B.C. and grew up in Vancouver and on Vancouver Island. He received his BA in Honours History from UBC and an MA and PhD in History from Princeton University.

After teaching at UCLA for a decade, Yu returned to UBC as an Associate Professor to help build programs focused on trans-Pacific Canada.

Yu himself is both a second and fourth generation Canadian. His parents were first generation immigrants from China, joining a grandfather who had spent almost his entire life in Canada. His great-grandfather was also an early Chinese pioneer in British Columbia, part of a larger network of migrants who left Zhongshan county in Guangdong province in South China and settled around the Pacific in places such as Australia, New Zealand, Hawai'i, the Caribbean, Southeast Asia, the United States, and Canada.

Prof. Yu's book, *Thinking Orientals: Migration, Contact, and Exoticism in Modern America* (Oxford University Press, 2001) won the Norris and Carol Hundley Prize as the Most Distinguished Book of 2001, and he is currently working on a book entitled *How Tiger Woods Lost His Stripes*.

**Next Meeting: Thursday, January 25, at 7:30 pm in the Vancouver Museum**

## PREZNOTES

### VHS Online: An Update

Last year at this time we were busily designing and composing our new VHS website, which debuted in late March 2006. Here's an update on its growing popularity and expanding content.

In its first full month last April, we received 837 visits from 630 individuals. Since then, the numbers have more than doubled to a high of 2,081 visits in November and 11,636 visits for the full eight months. A good start, eh?

In case you haven't visited lately, go to [www.vancouver-historical-society.ca](http://www.vancouver-historical-society.ca) and see what's there. "Events and Programs" shows you our upcoming programs. "Links" connects you to other historical groups and institutions. Under "Archives" you'll find our newsletters back to October 2003, and programs (along with related print and internet references) clear back to 1937! On the lists of VHS presidents and award recipients you'll find the names of Gordon Elliott and Anne Yandle, memorialized in this issue.

A special link on our home page will take you to the Spencer's Time Capsule: the story of its recent return to Vancouver, photos of the November "unveiling," and a complete inventory of the recovered contents.

Sprinkled throughout the site are historic photos. To know what you're seeing, right-click the photo and then click "properties" to get the photo's source and full caption (stretch the box with your mouse if necessary).

Let's see... the VHS now has 218 members. If each of us visited our website just twice a month, that would boost our total visits for 2007 to... Well, just *do* it.

*Paul Flucke, President*

### Welcome New Members:

Laurence Brown  
Chris McGregor

Wally Kiel  
Karen Ramstedt

## THANK YOU!

... to the eight people who donated a total of \$810 to the VHS in November and December. Seven gifts were for our Operating Fund and one (\$500!) was designated for our Research and Publication Fund.

## Incorporation Day Luncheon

The annual Incorporation Day Luncheon will be held on Sunday April 1st, 2007 at the University Golf Club, 5185 University Boulevard at 12 noon.

Our speaker for the event will be Jim Lowden, Director of the Stanley District, Vancouver Parks Board, who will speak on the history of Stanley Park. This is sure to be a topic of current interest to all of our members.

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.

### For VHS members – A Look Inside the Spencer's Time Capsule

Back in November when we reported on the VHS role in repatriating the Spencer's Time Capsule, we promised VHS members an opportunity to view the recovered contents, now housed in the City of Vancouver Archives.

Here it is: a special VHS viewing at the Archives (just east of the Museum in Vanier Park) on **Wednesday, January 31, 7:00 to 8:00 pm**. Admission is free, but bring your VHS membership card.

Before you come, visit our VHS website to review the story of the Capsule's origin, disappearance and return, and study the inventory of items to see which ones you'll want to watch for at the viewing.

### Gordon Raymond Elliott, 1910-2006

Gordon Elliott was one of the leading members of our Vancouver Historical Society at a time when we needed firm direction. Vice-President in 1968, he introduced ethnic history as a field of study for the Society with a speakers' series on local ethnic groups. In this, Gordon was way out front for the universities in Canada at that time did not consider ethnic studies — certainly not local history — to be worthy of their attention. As President, 1970-1972, he launched a publication program with the production of three local histories, the Occasional Papers Series.

As a result of his enterprise and vision, we have since gone on to make publishing an important part of our Society's work.

Gordon brought to our Society an extensive scholarship in history with years of experience in research. Writer, editor and teacher, mentor and friend to many, we salute him for his fine contribution to our Society and to the writing and publication of local history. *Irene Howard*



# Anne Yandle, 1930 - 2006



It is with great sadness that the members of the Vancouver Historical Society and the British Columbia Historical Federation mourn the death of Anne Yandle, one of their longest serving members. Anne died of cancer on December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2006 after a comparatively short illness.

Anne was born near Ballymoney, Northern Ireland, December 29, 1930. She grew up there with her two brothers Robert and David. She received her B.A and B.Com at Trinity College Dublin before coming to Canada in the late 1950s. Anne worked briefly at the Vancouver

Public Library before attending McGill University School of Librarianship. Her career as a member of the Special Collections Division of the University of British Columbia Library began on July 1961. By the time of her retirement in 1991, Anne had developed one of the most outstanding research collections in North America with special emphasis on British Columbia history and literature.

Very soon after settling in Vancouver, Anne joined the Vancouver Historical Society where she became one of the most active members. Anne's love for history, especially that of her province, was always reflected in her work. As W. Kaye Lamb wrote in 1937, "any country worthy of a future should be interested in the past".

Anne served on many committees and through her various contacts she was always able to suggest names for speakers and projects. One of the most important projects was the Vancouver Bibliography, which was published in four volumes in 1986. It is now on-line at the University of British Columbia as a result of Anne's efforts.

Anne received the annual Vancouver Historical Society Award of Historical Merit twice — in 1979 for outstanding service to the VHS and in 1988 (with Jill Rowland and Peggy Imredy) for the Vancouver Centennial Bibliography.

Anne and her husband Phil published and edited the BC Historical News (now BC History) for more than ten years. Anne also began to edit the book review section of the News which she continued until her death. After her retirement, Anne and her friend Jill Rowland established Marco Polo Books. The collection was always heavily oriented to BC history and travel. Anne always had a table at the annual conference of the BCHF where she met friends and made new acquaintances. Anne was a wonderful friend. She gave support to all who needed help. Her home was always open to everyone.

Anne lived life to the fullest, enjoying travel, music, opera, theater and outdoor activities. Although Anne maintained membership in many societies, she gave most of her support over the years to the Vancouver Historical Society and the BCHF. Both organizations and her many friends have suffered a great loss.

*Melva Dwyer*

## 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, January 25, 2007

### **100-60-40-10: The Rise and Fall (and Rise Again) of Pacific Vancouver**

**Speaker: Henry Yu**

The year 2007 marks a series of anniversaries of watershed moments in Vancouver's relationship to Canada and the Pacific world. Come and see the changes that took place and nudged Vancouver into its place as a global city.

Thursday, February 22, 2007

### **Vancouver Through the Archives of the CBC**

**Speaker: Colin Preston**

Watch scenes of a Vancouver long gone. Enjoy an evening of film treasures selected from the CBC film vaults by broadcast archivist and librarian Colin Preston. CBC local television broadcasting started in 1953 but some of the films being showcased go back to the 1930s and 1940s.

Thursday, March 22, 2007

### **The History of St. Paul's Hospital**

**Speaker: Lois Blais**

Founded in 1894 by the Sisters of the Charity of Providence, St. Paul's Hospital began as a 25-bed wood framed building. Over the years, with many additions, it has become a major hospital specializing in such things as AIDS treatment. Due to concerns about the older buildings' abilities to withstand earthquake damage, it may be moved from its Burrard Street location.

Thursday, April 26, 2007

### **Comrade Dad: A Father and a Vancouver Bookstore**

**Speaker: Karin Lee**

Filmmaker Karin Lee will show and speak about her film *Comrade Dad*, the story of her father who ran the China Arts and Crafts bookstore. This quintessentially Vancouver story is about ideology and family and what it was like to live in Chinatown in the fifties and sixties before Canada recognized China.

*The rest of this season's program will be announced in future newsletters.*

## Early Entertainment in Vancouver and Theatre Restoration

November Speakers: John Atkin and Peter Fairchild

John Atkin, always a favorite with VHS members, took us on a magical mystery tour of Vancouver's earliest theatres on Thursday, November 23 with special attention to the Pantages, a little "jewel box" on East Hastings that will, before long, spring back to life as a home for live music and drama.

The Pantages, John reminded us, in a continually interesting and often funny talk, is the oldest surviving theatre in Vancouver, and the oldest Pantages theatre in North America. Construction was started in 1907, and the theatre—whose original architect was Edward Evans Blackmore—opened in 1908. It was named for entrepreneur Alexander Pantages. He was born Pericles Pantages in 1876 on the Greek island of Andros, but started calling himself Alexander after being told the story of Alexander the Great. He ran away from home at age nine, and worked at many jobs—often at sea—and in several countries. The Klondike gold rush of the late 1890s lured the young Pantages, as it did thousands of others, to Skagway, Alaska. His adventures there included a liaison with 'Klondike Kate' Rockwell, and his first foray into showbiz: a crude little theatre.

Pantages left Skagway for Seattle in 1902 (skipping out on a debt to Kate) and started a small theatre there. For your 10 cents you saw some short movies "and two bad vaudeville acts". His second theatre was our old friend, the Pantages on East Hastings.

Rivalry between theatre owners could be rough, and Alexander Pantages was as rough and tough as they came. John told of a time when Pantages stole the instrument of a well-known xylophone player, a man slated to appear in a rival theatre. The player, suspecting the thief was Pantages, telephoned him. Yes, the unabashed impresario told him, he had his xylophone, but if he wanted it back he'd have to

come and perform in his theatre. The player refused.

Still on the phone, Pantages hollered aside to one of his staff, "Take that xylophone out into the alley and burn it." The player caved in, and performed in the Pantages location.

The little theatre that still exists in Vancouver was not the only one Pantages had built here. Old-timers will recall a much larger and more ornate Pantages farther west on Hastings. This beauty, with its 2,000 seats and ornate interior, opened in 1917 at 20 West Hastings. Over the years, with new owners, it became the Majestic, then the Beacon and finally the Odeon Hastings. Then, in 1967, it became a parking lot. Today, John told us, that space is occupied by a social housing complex, "The Portland."

We heard of many other theatres—the Rex, the Lux, Hart's Opera House, the Bijou, the Empress and more—accompanied by some terrific photographs and architectural renderings. The VHS members lucky enough to attend this talk learned a lot about Vancouver's early entertainment venues.

They also learned that the City Opera Company, a Chinese Opera company and other theatre organizations are working hard to make this little jewel box sparkle again.



RIGHT: John Atkin, above, and Peter Fairchild.

### Vancouver Historical Society - Leadership, 2005 - 2006 (elected May 25, 2006)

#### EXECUTIVE:

President	Paul Flucke	Director	Chuck Davis
Vice President (Programs)	Bruce Watson	Director (Membership)	Elizabeth Hawkins
Treasurer (Vacant)	Paul Flucke (pro tem)	Director (Newsletter Editor)	Jim McGraw
Secretary (Historica Fair)	Sidney Madden	Director (Research Service)	Wayne Norton
Director (Newsletter Mailing)	Barbara Coles	Director	Larry Wong

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