

Vancouver Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

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Suspect Properties Speaker: Jordan Stanger-Ross

During times of war, civilized behaviour and common decency give way to the baser instincts of fear, survival and worse. Such was the mindset after December 7, 1941 when Imperial Japan attacked Pearl Harbour and invaded SE Asia, including Hong Kong where Canadian troops, defending British Empire interests, were defeated and taken prisoner. Immediate fear-driven speculation of potential sabotage and espionage from any of the 29,000 mainly coastal B.C. Japanese residents, many of whom were in the fishing industry, caused removal from the coast of all residents of Japanese ancestry.

In January of 1942, with the Federal Government acting as trustee, those being herded into collection centres were assured that Canada's Custodian of Enemy Property would "protect and preserve" their homes and farms for the duration of the war. A hint of things to come manifested itself when non-Japanese neighbours, offering to harbour some of the valuables for the duration of internment, were told by the RCMP they would be arrested if they did so.

By the spring of 1943 the government was hastily selling all Japanese property, including almost 2,000 parcels of real estate. At the end of the war, the internees who no longer had property were given the option of deportation or transfer to other parts of Canada.



Some of the many vehicles that were seized from B.C. residents of Japanese ancestry. The vehicles were gathered at Hastings Park on March 10, 1942. Boats and real estate were part of the seizures.

Photo: Jack Lindsay, photographer, City of Vancouver Archives CVA 1184-86

Why was Canada so punitive when in Hawaii, only about 1,500 of the 150,000 Japanese Americans were interned? As well, at the end of the war, when the Pacific Coast Japanese were released from American internment camps, they were given a train ticket and \$25 to return to their

former houses. Further, they were able to make claims for property lost or stolen.

Why such a big difference and what had changed from early promises of protection? Were the assurances of 1942 deliberate lies? Was the liquidation of property part of an

attempt by racist British Columbians to rid the province of the Japanese, once and for all?

Racial ideology interwove with ideas of neighbourhood and property to convince bureaucrats that they had defensible grounds for liquidation. The policy, derived from complicated and synthetic logic, was not one based entirely on racial hatred. Our next speaker, Jordan Stanger-Ross will take us through the steps that led to a sad chapter in Canadian history.

Jordan Stanger-Ross, author of numerous publications on ethnic relations in North America, is an Associate Professor of Canadian history in the Faculty of humanities, University of Victoria.

Bruce M. Watson

Next Meeting: 7:30 p.m., Thursday, January 23, 2013 at Museum of Vancouver

President's Notes

In addition to Gerry Wasserman's marvelous talk on the history of theatre in Vancouver, our November 28 meeting featured a sale of books that raised \$170 for the Historical Society. Thanks to members for buying them, and to Charles Hou and Florence Sung for managing the sale.

In rummaging through the Society's storage cupboard in preparation for the book sale I noticed a four-volume set of the Vancouver Centennial Bibliography, which of course we have kept for our records. The discovery reminded me of one of the highlights of our Society's past, the publication in 1986 of a comprehensive bibliography of material in various formats — from books and pamphlets to manuscript collections and films — on Vancouver history. The project, which generated over 15,000 citations, was a massive undertaking and stands as a model of the Historical Society's enterprise and leadership. For three years a special committee of the Society headed by Jill Rowland and VHS president Peggy Imredy developed guidelines and sought funding for the bibliography, and John Spittle managed complex finances — more than \$100,000 — that included grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and support from corporate and private sources and the UBC Library. These funds sponsored students' work as cataloguers, researchers, and "keyers" and financed overall management by Linda Hale. While sponsored by the VHS, the project operated out of the Special Collections Division of UBC under the direction of Lorenda Daniels, Frances Woodward, and Anne Yandle. Many volunteers also contributed. Frances tells me that "it was awfully quiet around Special Collections when the project was finished!"

Two recent projects follow in the tradition of the Bibliography project: the City Reflections DVD (completed in 2008), based on William Harbeck's streetscape images from 1907, and the current "Vancouver in Time" project, to feature 125 Vancouver "places that matter" in an online app. Ironically, the internet technology that is the basis of today's Vancouver in Time app project limits the need for formal, published bibliographies. Still relevant, however, is the spirit of engagement that made the 1980s project such a success.

Bob McDonald, President
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Getting Your Car to the North Shore

Continued from Page 4

travelling as pedestrians on the ferries. Much as on the SeaBus today, North Vancouverites travelled to Vancouver to work or to shop at the downtown stores. During the war years, there were huge numbers who went to work from Vancouver to the shipyards on the North Shore. The ferries ran on a 24-hour schedule to accommodate the round the clock shift work.

After the war, shipyard work eased. Wartime rationing of gasoline had ended. More people were buying their first car. Passenger counts on the ferries were dropping. The passenger-only West Vancouver ferries were the first casualty. Inaugurated in 1909, the ferries ran between the foot of 17th Street in West Vancouver and the foot of Columbia Street in Vancouver. In 1912 the privately-owned company was sold to the Municipality of West Vancouver, which then moved the northern terminal to the foot of 14th Street a year later. The last ferry sailed for West Vancouver at midnight on February 8, 1947.

The municipally-owned North Vancouver ferries would outlast their West Vancouver counterparts by little more than a decade.

The company tried saving money by eliminating ticket sellers and turnstile operators on the North Shore. The ferry's mate would collect fares from the motorists who would then freely drive off on the Vancouver side. Pedestrians were expected to pay on the Vancouver side. It turned out to be a bit of a false economy when it was noticed that driver only vehicles embarking in North Vancouver were suddenly driving off in Vancouver with full carloads of passengers.

By 1948, the run was being covered by only two ferries, Numbers 4 and 5. Besides passengers, both carried about 65 cars. The vessels were getting more expensive to operate. In 1955, passenger accommodations on No. 4 were modified to make room for more vehicles. While vehicular traffic did grow somewhat, it wasn't enough to cover increasing costs. In 1955, departures were still being offered every 20 minutes from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm with 40-minute departures until 1:00 am but by 1957, there was no service after 6:00 pm.

The last trip was made by ferry No. 4 with Captain George Simpson in command. As soon as the ferry tied up at the

Continued on next page top left

Getting Your Car to the North Shore

Continued from Page 2

North Vancouver dock, Captain Simpson gave three blasts on the whistle and said simply, "Well, that's it."

The scheduled ferry service between North Vancouver and Vancouver that had begun in 1900 was over. Nineteen years would pass before ferry service in the form of SeaBus passenger-only catamarans would start again in 1977. Ironically it was because of traffic congestion on the Lions Gate Bridge. While the new Seabus service used the old CPR Cordova Street Station in downtown Vancouver as its entrance, the new northern terminal was just a short block west of the original Lonsdale Avenue ferry terminal.

Until about 12 years ago, SeaBus passengers arriving at or departing from North Vancouver would see a remnant of the old North Vancouver ferry fleet — No. 5 built in 1941 was berthed near its old terminal having become the floating Seven Seas Seafood Restaurant in 1959, the year after her retirement.

To learn more about the Burrard Inlet ferries, read Captain James Barr's reminiscences in *Ferry Across the Harbor* (Mitchell Press 1969).

A New Way of Seeing the City

Imagine being able to see photos of buildings or streets in Vancouver's past on your smartphone while you're at that same location. "Vancouver in Time" does exactly that. It is a smartphone application in which users are able to access historical images and information from wherever they are, cleverly integrating contemporary photos with archival images contrasting "then and now." An update under the direction of VHS member and urban historian John Atkin, with the cooperation of the Vancouver Historical Society (VHS), the Vancouver Heritage Foundation (VHF), and Simon Fraser University (SFU), will integrate the VHF's "Places That Matter" information and greatly expand the application's usefulness. The VHS is asking for donations for this project, anticipated to be completed before Summer 2014. Our goal is to raise \$5,000, and we are already half-way there! If you would like to contribute, please send your cheque, payable to Vancouver Historical Society, to the VHS post office box: P.O. Box 3071 Vancouver, BC V6B 3X6, or drop it off at a monthly meeting.

Upcoming Speakers

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 p.m. on the fourth Thursday of every month except June, July, August, December).

Thursday, Feb. 27, 2014

Empire of Ice: History of the Pacific Coast Hockey Association, 1911-1926

Speaker: Craig Bowsby

Vancouver's first and (so far) only Stanley Cup was won by the Millionaires of the Pacific Coast Hockey Association in 1915. The league was founded by the Patrick brothers, who went on to build an indoor hockey rink in Vancouver and to modernize many aspects of the game. Learn more about this fascinating but short-lived period of Vancouver hockey glory.

Thursday, March 27, 2014

Images of Vancouver Through Time

Speaker: Jason Vanderhill

Vancouver became a city when the age of photography was already well established. The city's very earliest and historic moments have been captured on film. Join Jason Vanderhill, an internet promoter of Vancouver, to watch a presentation featuring a variety of images which reflect the complexity of the city through the years.

Thursday, April 24, 2014

The History of Art and Artists in Vancouver

Speaker: Gary Sim

Since the city's beginnings in 1886, Vancouver has had resident visual artists who have interpreted and presented the city to the rest of the world. While the contemporary artists may be familiar, few are aware of Vancouver surveyor Lauchlin Hamilton's early watercolours, or museum curator William Ferris's painting of Coal Harbour replete with Hawaiian Rancherie. Artist, printmaker, researcher, publisher Gary Sim brings to light the names and works of the artists who called Vancouver their home or who captured it in passing.

Getting Your Car to the North Shore

by Jim McGraw

The melodically operatic voice of renowned B.C. Electric Railway historian and VHS member Henry Ewert was instantly recognizable among my phone messages. “Jim, you could take your car on the ferries too.”

Indeed in the November newsletter, I had noted the 75th anniversary of the opening of the Lions Gate Bridge. I had written that prior to the bridge’s opening, the only way to get your vehicle to the North Shore was by taking the original Second Narrows Bridge that had opened in 1925.

Henry with a smile in his voice, reminded me that you could have also driven onto a North Vancouver Ferries vessel at the foot of Columbia Street and be taken to the foot of Lonsdale in North Vancouver. I had been thinking of driving directly across to the North Shore and so had forgotten about the ferry alternative for cars at the time.

In fact, the first regularly scheduled ferry that accommodated vehicles was introduced in 1905, five years

after scheduled service began and 20 years before the opening of the original Second Narrows Bridge.

Driving from the heart of Vancouver to the low-level Second Narrows Bridge was a long way to go to then drive back to the centre of the City of North Vancouver. You also never knew when the bridge’s movable section would be

raised for ships. The bridge was also out of commission for several long periods when various ships and barges damaged it while trying to navigate the difficult shallows, currents and tides of the narrows.

So the real competition for the ferries really only began after the Lions Gate Bridge opened as a toll bridge in November 1938. A convenient bus service was soon

inaugurated over the bridge that did away with any need to transfer, unlike at the ferry terminals. While some people still put their cars on the ferry for the short ride across the inlet, most started using the bridge. Or they continued



Disembarking from North Vancouver Ferry No. 4 at the foot of Columbia Street in Vancouver in 1954 .

Photo: Province newspaper (photographer) Vancouver Public Library VPL 2869

Continued on Page 2 top right

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