

Vancouver Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

ISSN 0042 - 2487

Vol. 48 No. 1 June 2008

Summer Field Trips

This Summer: Bootleggers, Brothels and Electric Interurbans too!

Summertime is when we traditionally take a break. And so it is with our series of monthly historical talks. We start a new season on September 25th with a fascinating talk on B.C.-based Olympic athletes of the present and the past.

In the meantime though, we have two terrific field trips planned for the summer months. These field trips are free for members of the VHS but they are limited in the number of people we can accommodate.

On Saturday, July 19th at 10:00 am, join us for a unique walking tour conducted by the Vancouver Police Museum entitled "Sins of the City." Learn about vice in the early days while exploring some of the oldest parts of the city.

Our guide will regale us with stories of bootleggers, prohibition, and the often-quirky evolution of liquor laws (and their enforcement); the development of the early drug trade and the surprising origins of Canada's narcotic laws; racial and labour tension boiling over into demonstrations, riots, and murder; the evolution of the sex trade, from brothels to streetwalkers; and the city's considerable predilection for gambling.

You will also be able to visit the Police

Museum on the day of the tour at no charge. The Police Museum is in the old Coroner's Court, where one-time famed Hollywood swashbuckler Errol Flynn was laid out on the morgue table after meeting his untimely end in our city.



*Juvenile Delinquent weapons, 1928.
Vancouver Public Library VPL9109.*

This tour is limited to 20 people. We will open the VHS Info-Line (604-878-9140) on Thursday, June 26th from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm for reservations. We will take the first 20 calls for those available spaces. You will receive confirmation within 48 hours. Details will then be given as to the starting point of

the tour. We ask participants to wear comfortable walking shoes, as the tour is approximately two hours in duration and covers about 10 blocks.

Our next summer field trip will take you back over 90 years in time.

On Sunday, August 24th, join us for a ride on B.C. Electric Railway interurban car Number 1231. The car went into operation in 1913 serving mostly on the Steveston route from the north end of the old Granville Bridge, through Kerrisdale, Marpole and across Lulu Island to Steveston.

The line was eventually shortened on the north end to Marpole and 1231 continued running on the truncated route to Steveston until all interurban service ended in 1958 — 50 years ago this year.

The car now runs on a one-time freight route from the entrance of Granville Island to about Ontario Street. This will be the last opportunity to ride the car for some time. Next year, the City of Vancouver is rebuilding the tracks for a trial streetcar project.

We will leave from the Granville Island stop just east of Anderson Street and Lamey's Mill Road under the Granville Street Bridge. Look for the railroad tracks.

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Next Meeting: Thursday, September 25 at 7:30 pm at the Vancouver Museum

PREZNOTES

As returning President of the Vancouver Historical Society for 2008-09, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to members of the old Board who have agreed to serve yet another term. My thanks go to Chuck Davis, Paul Flucke, Elizabeth Hawkins, Jim McGraw, Lisa Smedman and Larry Wong who soldiered so splendidly last year and who agreed to selflessly carry on. A special thanks go to Sidney Madden who served so well as secretary for two years and is now stepping down. We will miss her excellent work.

At the same time I would like to welcome Jacqueline Gresko to the Board. A long-time member of and several times speaker to the VHS, Jacqueline retired from the History Department at Douglas College in 2006. She has served as BC Historical Federation President and as federation rep on the Stakeholder Advisory Committee to the Land Title and Survey Authority of BC.

We have three field trips coming up this summer and expect a large number will attend each. We are still putting together the fall schedule and as soon as it is done, it will be up on our website and then in our September newsletter.

We look forward to another great year pursuing the idea, which is Vancouver. Just why did this area of land, once settled with natives who exploited the rich topography, turn into a large international "city state" where hundreds of thousands of people from a variety of backgrounds rub shoulders every day? The search for an answer is why people come to our monthly Speaker Series and go on our field trips.

Bruce M. Watson, President

City Reflections Marketing

We are looking for people interested in helping with the marketing of the City Reflections DVD. Marketing experience is a plus but not necessary. If you are interested, please send an e-mail to info@vancouver-historical-society.ca or phone 604-878-9140.

Summer Field Trips

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Our car will take us to the carbarn near Ontario and First Avenue. We will then get a tour of the carbarn where the interurbans are maintained.

We will see car Number 1207, which was built in 1905 and still operates. That car spent most of its regular service life running from the Carrall and Hastings B.C. Electric Railway terminal to New Westminster on either the Burnaby Lake or Central Park lines. It didn't go further east because its 75 hp motors weren't strong enough to tackle the Scott Road hill in Surrey. That was left to the 125 hp motored cars.

This tour is limited to 40 people. Again, we will open the VHS Info-Line (604-878-9140) on Thursday, July 24th from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm for reservations. We will take the first 40 calls for those available spaces. You will receive confirmation within 48 hours. Details will then be given as to the starting time.



B.C. Electric Railway No. 1207.

History of Vancouver Neighbourhoods

Watch for a fascinating book this fall on the neighbourhoods of Vancouver. Written by Vancouver *Courier* writer (and VHS Director) Lisa Smedman. The book is an expanded version of the award-winning series of *History's Lens* articles she wrote for the newspaper and is being published in conjunction with the newspaper's 100th anniversary this fall.

"I've always been fascinated with history. The more *History's Lens* columns I write, the more I realize how much has changed-and how little has changed," said Smedman in a *Courier* story written by Sandra Thomas. "The issues our city struggles with today are, in many cases, the issues it struggled with a century or more ago."

Happy 150th Birthday!

A trip that began in Frankfurt, Germany 160 years ago would leave an indelible mark on the future Vancouver. In 1848, brothers Godfrey, Charles, David and Isaac Oppenheimer left to pursue opportunities in North America.

Settling first in New Orleans, the brothers eventually moved to San Francisco. From there, it was on to Victoria where they opened a successful grocery business in 1858 — 150 years ago.

In the early 1880s, David and Isaac Oppenheimer learned that the railroad would be ending in the village of Granville, not Port Moody as everyone thought. They moved to Granville in 1885. They became part of a group that pushed for the incorporation of Granville as the City of Vancouver in 1886.

Isaac was elected to council while David became the second Mayor of Vancouver in 1888 serving four one-year terms. David also became the first President of the Board of Trade. He had a hand in many of the improvements to the young city's infrastructure including streetcars, lighting, water and sewage systems and much more. You can learn more about him by visiting www.vancouverhistory.ca.

A Charles Marega sculpted bust of David Oppenheimer sits at the Beach Avenue entrance to Stanley Park. That location will be the site of ceremonies on Saturday, July 12th starting at 2:00 pm, as the Oppenheimer Group of companies celebrates their 150th anniversary. VHS Director Chuck Davis has been invited to speak.

New Members

In May, the VHS welcomed the following new members:

George Bangham & Catherine Aitchison
Maurice & Tama Copithorne
Ken Peterson
M. Diane Rogers
Helen Smith
Florence & Alan Sung
Susan Sutherland
Barbara Tait
Shurli Tylor
Doreen Walker

Upcoming Speakers & Events

The VHS invites everyone (including non-members) to attend our monthly talks. The talks are free and 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). Special events may be held at other times for which there may be a fee.

Thursday, September 25, 2008, 7:30 pm

Olympic Athletes Past and Present

Speaker: Tom Hawthorn

With the 2010 Winter Olympics less than 17 months away, it's appropriate that we learn more about B.C.-based Olympic athletes past and present — athletes like George Hungerford, Percy Williams, Nancy Greene-Raines and others. Our speaker is a freelance newspaper and magazine writer in Victoria. Tom writes a weekly column for *The Globe and Mail*. He is currently finishing a book about the war experiences of the McGill University football team. "*A Greater Share of Honour*" will soon be published by HarperCollins.

Thursday, October 23, 2008, 7:30 pm

Vancouver and Its Counter-cultural Music Scene

Speaker: Scott Beadle

Counter-culture historian Scott Beadle, explores the rise of the "punk rock" music scene in Vancouver. Starting with the social landscape from which British Columbia's folk and hippie counter-cultures evolved, Scott will explore why Vancouver rose to become one of the world's significant cities in this worldwide movement and how it all ended in the mid-1980s. (For those worried about their eardrums, please rest assured no music will actually be played!)

Thursday, November 27, 2008, 7:30 pm

The CPR and Vancouver

Speaker: Frank Leonard

Learn about the CPR's dealings in the late 1880s. The CPR had plans for an area far to the west of today's facilities near Waterfront Station. Then again, a conflict with investors almost ended the Vancouver extension from Port Moody before it was even built. Dr. Leonard teaches at the Department of History at Douglas College in New Westminster. He is the author of *A Thousand Blunders: The Grand Trunk Pacific Railway and Northern British Columbia*.

Watch this space in the September newsletter for the rest of our 2008-2009 series of historical talks.

City Reflections' BIG Opening Night

Wow! The usual turnout for one of the Society's public meetings can run anywhere from 50 to 120 people. For the VHS's May 22nd public premiere of *City Reflections*, the feature built around the 1907 film of Vancouver shot by William Harbeck, more than 400 came!

Needless to say, the theatre in the Museum/Planetarium wasn't big enough to accommodate them all. So the first 217 settled in for the show, filling every seat, while almost another 200 of the people who couldn't get in patiently waited just over an hour for a hastily arranged second showing.

Our thanks go to them, and to the Museum's administrators, for their patience.

The wait was worth it.

Harbeck's film, shot on May 7, 1907, first took viewers north along Granville Street, then east on Hastings. The streets were *packed* with people, and bicyclists, and horse-drawn wagons, and construction sheds . . . and precisely one car. (And it was parked!)

The movie is silent, in black-and-white, and is only six minutes long, but it's utterly fascinating, and the delighted reaction of the audience to the scenes of Vancouver 101 years ago proved its impact.

City Reflections is the 53-minute feature built around Harbeck's original little movie. The voice-over narration by VHS board member Jim McGraw, who also produced and directed *City Reflections*, pointed out important features along the way: the second CPR station, the Birks Clock, the offices of *The Daily Province*, the original Hudson's Bay store, the still under construction Manhattan Apartments and more. As Harbeck's BCER streetcar rumbled along century-

old Cambie, Cordova, Robson and Davie, other voices were heard describing the sights: Dal Richards, Chuck Davis, Grace McCarthy and Dave McCormick.

This is the oldest surviving movie film of Vancouver. The VHS's production — which will soon be available on DVD — includes the 53-minute main feature, plus a terrific set of extra attractions like a mini-biography of Harbeck himself, information about the wages and prices of 1907 Vancouver, the story of how this unique film was nearly lost forever, and much more. Please visit www.cityreflections.ca to order a copy for yourself or as a gift.



Cheque Checks

Beginning September 2, 2008, all banks in Canada will require all cheques to be dated using digits in DD-MM-YYYY format (eg. "02-09-2008"). Check your cheques — you may need new ones from your bank. We want to be able to deposit your renewal and donation cheques!

Vancouver Historical Society - Leadership, 2007 - 2008 (elected May 22, 2008)

EXECUTIVE:

President	Bruce Watson
Vice President (Programs)	Larry Wong
Treasurer	Paul Flucke
Recording Secretary	Jacqueline Gresko
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

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