

Vancouver Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

ISSN 0042 - 2487

Vol. 43 No. 6

March 2004

Dreaming in the Rain:

How Vancouver Became Hollywood North by Northwest
speaker: David Spaner

Today most Vancouverites revel at seeing the lights, headlines and personalities associated with our city's new identity as Hollywood North. Transformed from a Hollywood backlot to a studio city, Vancouver has emerged as the home of major movie successes and such TV series as the *X-Files*, as well as the location of a growing and vibrant Canadian-based film scene.

Join us as Province movie critic David Spaner takes us into the history of that scene, from his acclaimed new book, *Dreaming in the Rain: How Vancouver Became Hollywood North by Northwest*. He will discuss Vancouver's film history and will answer questions about its development and current state.



Mr. Spaner will tell us about movie swashbuckler Errol Flynn's last days partying in our city, noting that his death in 1959 drew the attention of the world to this small port city. He will take us into the Canadian film scene in Vancouver, described as among the most provocative and acclaimed in the film world. He will introduce us to Larry Kent, the city's first independent filmmaker, whose edgy Vancouver films, frowned upon by the censors of the 1960s, have become Canadian classics.

Clips will be screened and discussed from such Kent films as *The Bitter Ash* and *When Tomorrow Dies*, two of the earliest Vancouver movies.

Copies of Mr. Spaner's book will be available for sale in the Museum Gift Shop.

David Spaner is a Vancouver Province movie critic. A graduate of Simon Fraser University and Langara College, he has worked as a reporter, editor, and feature writer for numerous publications. Born in North York, Ontario, David grew up in Vancouver.

Thursday, March 25, 2004, at 7:30 pm, Upper Joyce Whalley
Learning Centre, Vancouver Museum

Preznotes

This month's column holds good news, bad news, and a promise. The good news is the wonderful turnout for our February 26 public meeting. A popular topic and improved publicity drew 130 people - double our normal attendance - for John Atkin's presentation on the history of Kitsilano.

The bad news is that those seated in the back half of the jam-packed room were largely unable to hear the speaker or see the projection screens! The problem was that showing excerpts from the old Kitsilano videotape required an LED projector which is available only in the Lower Walley room, and that room has a lower ceiling and less adequate sound system than the Upper Walley room where we normally meet. We sincerely apologize to all who suffered the consequences.

But here's the promise: David Plouffe, Public Programs Officer for the Museum, tells me that within the next few months, our regular room will be equipped with an LED projector, built-in projection screen, and window blinds. Those improvements, plus its greater seating capacity, should take care of all foreseeable VHS needs - at least until we start renting the Orpheum. So keep coming, folks, and bring your friends!

On another subject, the Executive is currently looking into possible tours and field trips during the spring and summer, and would welcome your suggestions. Pass them on to me or any member of the Executive.

Finally, a reminder that we are seeking candidates for VHS officers and at-large Executive members to be elected for one-year terms at our May 27 AGM. Give me a call if you'd like more information on what's involved.

Paul Flucke, President
paulflucke@shaw.ca 604-732-7742

FOUND: Vancouver Centennial Bibliography

Last month we ran a short ad asking if anyone had a copy of VHS's *Vancouver Centennial Bibliography* for the Vancouver Public Library Special Collections Division. VHS member Neil Sutherland had an extra copy and passed it on to the VPL.

COMING SOON

The Incorporation Day Lunch

Tickets for the Incorporation Day luncheon, April 4 at the University Golf Club, are going swiftly. Besides a wonderful lunch at a beautiful location, you will have an opportunity to learn about the history of Chinese people in Vancouver from our guest speaker Dr. W.B. Chung.

If you have not already purchased your tickets, you can still do so. Tickets are \$25 each until March 26, after that until March 31, which is the absolute deadline, tickets will be \$30. You can get your tickets at the March 25 speaker meeting or by writing: Elizabeth Hawkins, 3626 West 1st Avenue, Vancouver, B.C., V6R 1H2. Please enclose a cheque with your request for tickets. For more information, call Elizabeth at 604-737-8045.

The University Golf Club is located at 5185 University Boulevard, Vancouver. The #10 bus stops in front of the Golf Club on University Boulevard. There is also ample parking at the club. See you there!



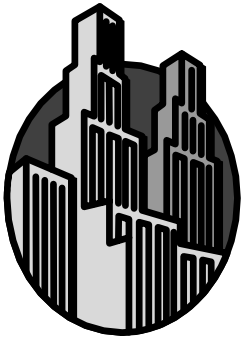
Welcome to the Vancouver Historical Society!

New Members

December 2003 - March 2004

Susan Buss	New Westminister
Ross Carter	Vancouver
Lynn Copeland	Vancouver
Chuck Davis	Surrey
John Helm	West Vancouver
Sara Jones	Vancouver
Carol Malpass	Vancouver
Bill McKee	Vancouver
Don Meikle	Vancouver
Peter Minshull	North Vancouver
Mr. & Mrs. Alan Shaw	Vancouver
Catherine Taylor	Vancouver

What's in a name?



Stephen Owen, Minister of Public Works, has invited the Vancouver Historical Society to help select a name for the new federal building at 401 Burrard Street in Vancouver.

We were asked to appoint one member to the selection panel. The Executive asked Jean Barman, UBC professor and VHS member, to fill our spot, and Jean accepted.

Later this month, the public will be asked to suggest names for the two-year old building, already occupied by Canadian government offices. The selection panel will reduce the suggestions to a "short list" from which the Minister will make the final choice.

So watch the newspapers, submit your suggestion, and stay tuned for the final choice!

"Beyond Coal"

British Columbia Heritage Federation
Annual Conference
Nanaimo, May 6-8, 2004

This year's BCHF Annual Conference entitled, *Beyond Coal*, will be held in Nanaimo at the Dorchester Hotel, May 6-8, 2004. The conference includes: tours, lectures, workshops, and a display of British Columbia publications.

Details of the agenda and registration forms can be found at the BCHF website: www.bchistory.ca. Registration forms will also be available at upcoming Vancouver Historical Society meetings. Conference fees are \$125 per person, including a banquet on Saturday, May 8th. For more information call Barbara Coles at 604-733-2650.

Come to the Historica Fair

Vancouver's first Historica Fair is set for May 7 and 8 at the Vancouver Museum. The Fair promotes young people's interest in Canadian history. Students in Grades 4 to 9 will be presenting their history projects for adjudication at the Historica Fair.

The Vancouver Historical Society is partnering with the Vancouver School Board, the Vancouver Museum, and the Vancouver Maritime Museum to present the Fair.

As one of the partners we have been requested to provide judges for the event and would like to invite our members to come forward as judges. Thank you to those who have already offered to be a judge. A few more are needed as we would like every student to be given plenty of attention during the judging portion of the event. A few students will be invited to present their projects at the final Historica Fair in Montreal. Please call Wes Knapp at 604-873-6602 if you would like to be one of the judges. Prior to the event, the judges will have an opportunity to examine the criteria and establish procedures for judging.

Vancouver students are currently involved in school-based Historica Fairs leading up to the Regional Fair on May 7 and 8. A wide range of projects are coming forward, from family history to neighbourhood retrospectives to urban heritage sites. A marvelous array of student insights into the past is evolving at school fairs. These will culminate in Vancouver's first Historica Fair. Please mark your calendars for this event which is free and an excellent way to support students' interest in history.

A Belated Happy Centennial Birthday

Gerry Andrews



One of the past presidents of BCHF, and later Honorary President, Gerry Andrews of Victoria, celebrated his 100th Birthday on December 12, 2003. Happy Birthday Gerry!

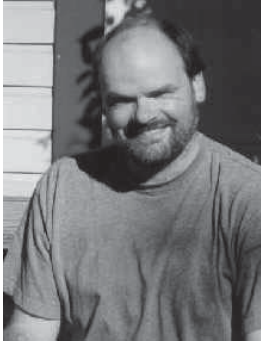
Naomi Miller, former BCHF president and Editor of BCHF NEWS, and several others at BCHF have decided to make a donation to the BC Historical Federation Scholarship Fund as a way to say "Happy Birthday" to Gerry.

If you too would like to make a donation to the scholarship fund in Gerry's name, mail it to: Naomi Miller, BC Historical Federation, PO Box 5254, Station B, Victoria, B.C. V8R 6N4.

VHS-3

Kitsilano Stories

FEBRUARY SPEAKER: John Atkin



Reviewed by: Ellen Ramsay

Historian and heritage advocate John Atkin spoke to members and friends of the Vancouver Historical Society this month on the history of Kitsilano based on stories collected from the V2K project. He began with the history of the early development of Kits Point

and used maps to illustrate the rough boundaries of the region, including the First Nations reserve and government plots. These government plots were ceded eventually to the CPR. Initially, however, the forest was so dense on the point that land settlers couldn't find the plots to develop them.

By 1890 CP Railway tracks ran across Kits Point to, what is now, the Kits Pool. Where the Maritime Museum now stands, a logging camp was established. There were also plans for the development of a deep sea port, but this was not to be.

By 1905 the first BC Electric streetcar bearing the name "Kitsilano" reached the point along land leased from the CPR. BC Electric then began selling 25 foot lots at Greers Beach. Most of these lots were purchased by mill workers employed at one of the 15 mills now lining False Creek. Eventually, however, larger homes were developed and the area gave way to

a mix of large and small residences. The beach had particular attraction for settlers and so cabins were built along Point Grey Road across from the larger homes.

The evening's talk was well attended. The discussion between John Atkin and the audience following the address concerned the mixed density of the housing in old Kitsilano and allowed participants to reminisce about past buildings such as the old Kits Theatre, which once stood where the Russian Hall stands now. Many thanks to John Atkin on behalf of all VHS members for a wonderful evening.

Coming up at the VHS

On the fourth Thursday of the month, Vancouver Historical Society sponsors speakers on the history of Vancouver. Meetings are held in the beautiful Vancouver Museum at 1100 Chestnut Street at 7:30 p.m. Upcoming speakers include:

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.

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

EXECUTIVE:

President	Paul Flucke
Vice President	Ian Hunt
Treasurer -Vacant	(Paul Flucke pro tem)
Recording Secretary	Ellen L. Ramsay
Past President & Programs	Joanne Savory
At Large (Newsletter mailing)	Barbara Coles
At Large	Imbi Harding
At Large (Membership)	Elizabeth Hawkins
At Large	Wes Knapp
At Large	John (Jack) Spibey

OTHERS:

Research Service	Helen Shore
Webmaster	D.J. MacKinnon
Info Line	Nancy Stubbs
Archivist	Elizabeth Walker
Newsletter Editor	Kathleen MacKinnon
	twoleos@gulfislands.com

CONTACTS:

Vancouver Historical Society Information Line: 604-878-9140
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 3071 Vancouver, BC, V6B 3X6.
Website: www.vcn.bc.ca/vhs.
Vancouver Bibliography Internet Address: <http://www.library.ubc.ca/vancouverbibliography>