



## Morag Maclachlan's Legacy: The Story of Noel Annance

By Madeleine de Trenqualye



Quebec Royal Mail, 1848, which made it possible for Noel Annance to correspond rapidly with government officials and others, by Amelia Frederica Dyneley. COURTESY JEAN BARMAN



In 1824 Noel Annance visited the lower Fraser as part of a reconnaissance mission for the HBC, and in 1827, helped to establish Fort Langley on the river. BC ARCHIVES PDP01891

May Speaker:  
**Jean Barman**

Introduction by Elizabeth Walker

Known for her celebrated histories of ordinary men and women, Jean Barman has received many phone calls over the years from people inviting her to look at their grandmother's diaries, or a great uncle's box of letters, hoping the award-winning historian might shine a scholarly light on their family tales.

In 2011, Barman was called on to examine a different kind of project - one that had consumed a fellow historian for two decades.

Morag Maclachlan, a fur trade researcher who taught history at Langara College, had long been intrigued by the story of Noel Annance, a Dartmouth-educated Abenaki fur trader who helped establish Fort Langley and gave his name to Annacis Island (originally called Annance's Island) in the Fraser River. She had already written about Annance's far west fur trade experiences in *The Beaver* and in her edited book *The Fort Langley Journals (1827-30)*, but she knew his story deserved further attention.

Maclachlan persuaded Jean Barman, an expert in Indigenous and fur trade history, to take over the project. "You have the time and expertise to tell it," she told Barman, handing over three boxes of notes, a manuscript journal Annance wrote in 1824, and a collection of love letters he had written to his mistress during a "torrid love affair" in the North.

Maclachlan passed away in 2011. Former Vancouver Historical Society President and fellow fur trade historian Bruce Watson remembers her as a backbone of the VHS, who faithfully brought cookies and coffee to every lecture in the days of meager attendance numbers. He also credits her for connecting a diverse group of fur trade historians. "We used to have gatherings at Morag's place and get sparked talking about the stories we were researching. It was a lively, engaged group and Morag was one of the leaders."

With Maclachlan's materials and Watson's help, Barman began piecing together the rest of Annance's life, digging into his ancestry and early education. "I wanted to understand who he was, so I went back in time." She uncovered the story of a man torn between two identities for his entire life: "too highly educated to be Indigenous, and too Indigenous to be accepted as the gentleman he considered himself to be by virtue of his education."

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## AGM Announcement

May 25, 7:00pm @ the MOV

Our AGM this year, as in previous years, will start a half hour before our normal 7:30 commencement of the lecture. We need at least 25 members for a quorum in order to get underway at 7:00 p.m. and hope you will come early. Please note that the AGM and lecture will be in the auditorium—downstairs to the right from the MoV atrium – rather than in our usual space in the Joyce Walley Room.

Your Executive is proposing no changes to membership terms or operations this year. There will be the usual treasurer's and president's reports and a motion to waive the audit, and the election of the executive committee for 2017–8.

Those of you who are members of other societies will probably know that all BC groups have to “transition” this year to the new Societies Act. In our case, we are merely re-ordering our constitution and bylaws to make them conform to the new format, rather than altering the wording. This is just an administrative change that does not need to be brought to the AGM for a vote.

–Michael Kluckner

## President's Notes

We have received many donations from our generous members over the past year, many in memory of our late newsletter editor Jim McGraw, and a recent one from the estate of Jennifer Sweeney. The Executive has decided to use \$5,000 of these donations, combined with one several years ago from lawyer Ted McWhinney QC (who died in 2015), to support the hiring of a Community History Research Assistant for the summer months by the Vancouver Heritage Foundation.

The VHF is the city-sponsored, arm's-length foundation established 25 years ago to provide grants and education in Vancouver, primarily about “heritage” – that is, buildings and sites – rather than “history,” which is what we do. The VHF is most in the public eye for the heritage homes tours every spring, including their 15th annual one upcoming on June 4th.

In 2011, the VHF created the Places That Matter program, a linking of sites in the city with historical events. The program managed to plaque 85 sites, but memory of it is fading. Our grant will help them to complete Phase II of it – an online Community History Resource that will combine people's stories with the hard research that went into the selection of the sites in the first place.

**Michael Kluckner**  
presidentvhs@gmail.com

## 2017 Incorporation Luncheon Photos



**ABOVE** Mike Harcourt draws a book prize ticket with Alan Sung.  
**LEFT** Bob McDonald drawing a ticket with Alan Sung.  
**PHOTOS BY** FLORENCE SUNG

### New VHS Members

Susan Barzo      Doreen Braverman      Nancy Campbell  
Eileen Chin      Dena Malkoc  
Chelsea Colwill      Geoff Wing

### Vancouver Historical Society Executive Board: 2016 - 2017 (ELECTED MAY 26, 2016)

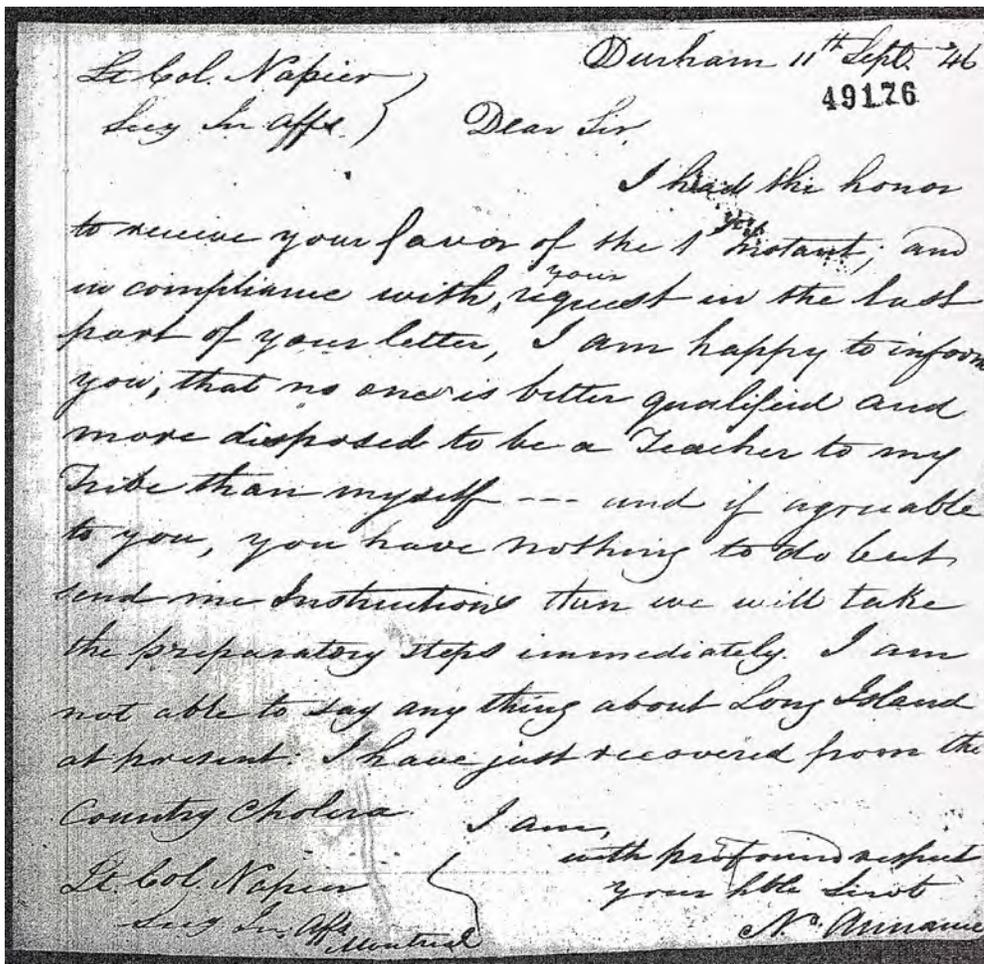
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<b>DIRECTOR (COMMUNICATIONS)</b>	Stevie Wilson

### Appointed Positions

<b>ARCHIVIST</b>	Alexandra Allen
<b>INFO LINE</b>	Jeannie Hounslow
<b>MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY</b>	Mary Wallace Poole
<b>NEWSLETTER MAILING</b>	Mary Gavan
<b>TOUR COORDINATOR</b>	Jo Pleshakov

### CONTACT

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Combing through the National Archives, Barman discovered some 60 letters written by Annance to Canada's Department of Indian Affairs (Barman learned to recognize his handwriting, which facilitated the search). Annance used his education to write regularly to government officials, protesting discrimination toward Indigenous people. **COURTESY JEAN BARMAN**

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Despite being far more educated than his colleagues and supervisors (Barman believes Annance may have been the most highly educated person at that time in today's British Columbia), Annance's Indigenous background kept him from progressing up the career ladder. Dismayed by his lack of promotion, Annance quit the fur trade and returned home to St. Francis, QC. In subsequent years, he wrote regularly to Department of Indian Affairs to protest discriminatory policies toward Indigenous people. Barman writes that he was one of a tiny number of Indigenous people at that time with the ability and audacity to speak back to the dominant society on its own terms.

She says one of the most interesting discoveries she made was that many of the discriminatory policies thought to have originated with the 1876 Indian

Act - such as dispossessing women of their Indian status or confining Indigenous peoples to reserves - were already well in place during Annance's lifetime. "This is what he was protesting," she says.

A father of at least 10 children, Noel Annance left behind many descendants, and Maclachlan had an opportunity to connect with some during her earlier research. A month after the book was published, Barman received a big box of maple syrup from a descendant in Vermont. He said how exciting it was that the family's story had finally been recognized, and that everything Barman had written was consistent with family narratives. "How did you know it all?" he asked.

*Abenaki Daring: The Life and Writings of Noel Annance, 1792-1869 came out in December 2016 and is dedicated to Morag Maclachlan.*

## Upcoming Speakers

The VHS invites everyone to attend our monthly talks. Admission for non-members is by donation. Talks are held at the Museum of Vancouver, 1100 Chestnut Street (in Vanier Park) at 7:30 p.m. on the fourth Thursday of every month except June, July, August and December.



Thursday September 28, 2017  
**The Japanese-Canadian Internment—75 years on**

Speakers: Mary and Tosh Kitigawa

The incarceration of 21,000 Japanese-Canadians in 1942 was a shocking period in Canada's history that directly affected Mary and Tosh Kitigawa. The Kitigawas will discuss the anti-Asian sentiment that led to the forcible removal of Mary's father by the RCMP to work on the road camps. The rest of the family were sent to the horse barns at Hastings Park and later interned at seven different camps.

Thursday October 26, 2017

**The Last Gang in Town**

Speaker: Aaron Chapman, author

Decades before organized crime syndicates brought sensational drug wars to Vancouver, street gangs held sway over its unruly east side. None was considered tougher or more feared than the Clark Park gang, a wild, two-fisted crew of characters from Vancouver's post-1960s counterculture. This presentation is the story of the after dark-underbelly of the city's not-so-distant past.



The Birks Building at Granville and Georgia (where the London Drugs store is today) was demolished in May 1974. Two months earlier, a group of people got together and held a funeral. Angus McIntyre attended the funeral and took photos of the day. PHOTO BY ANGUS MCINTYRE

## Meet Me Under the Birks Clock

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By Angus McIntyre

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On March 24, 1974, I rode my bike downtown to attend a funeral service. The weather was sunny and +10C, and since it was a Sunday, traffic was light and the Granville Mall was still under construction. I saw the procession of mourners with a police escort coming from the old Art Gallery on Georgia at Thurlow. I heard a small band playing a sombre funeral dirge. It looked like the old photos of funerals in the Vancouver of 1900.

The funeral was put together by a group of staff and students from the UBC School of Architecture, and included architects and historians. As the service was about to start, crews working on

the new building at Georgia and Granville shut off the air compressors and laid down their tools. There was a Gathering, a Sharing of Ideas, a Choir performance and a Laying of the Wreaths. A small group of people wearing recycled videotape clothing put hexes on new buildings nearby. As soon as it came time to return to the Art Gallery, the band switched to Dixieland jazz, and the mood became slightly more upbeat.

I had been able to photograph the interior of the store through the courtesy of Thom Birks, and was even able to access the roof for some photos. I later presented him with a portfolio of images, and in return he gave me a framed print of the building. I had occasionally shopped there over the years, and the pneumatic tube system for purchas-

es lasted almost to the end. When you entered the store for the first time, you couldn't help but look up at the incredible ceiling detail.

Demolition had already begun by the time of the funeral service, and it was fitting that enough people cared to have a farewell ceremony. The large R.I.P. banner ended up in a second storey office at the narrow Sam Kee building at Carrall and Pender Streets, visible as I drove my bus every day on the Stanley Park route. I visited Montreal years later, and was surprised to find Birks in an 1894 building. The store, with its incredible interior, was intact. It was sold recently to a developer for conversion to a boutique hotel, with plans to retain the original building and store. It is sad that Vancouver's Birks Building did not get the same treatment.