

Vancouver Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

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Building the West: The Early Architects of BC *Speaker: Donald Luxton*



Join local author and heritage consultant Donald Luxton for an illustrated presentation of the material contained within his latest book, *Building the West: The Early Architects of British Columbia*.

Recently awarded the Heritage Canada Achievement Award, this remarkable publication chronicles British Columbia's rich architectural and social history through its urban landscape. Starting before the first flood of immigration during the 1858 Gold Rush, this book follows the lives of about 400 significant individuals first drawn here by the opportunities of frontier settlement, and the establishment and maturation of their profession over time. *Building the West* constitutes a legacy of over a century of built landscape in British Columbia.

The stories of these early architects illustrate how the province developed, during times of both prosperity and adversity, and encompass the broad sweep of British Columbia's history. The individual accomplishments of these architects were remarkable, given the difficult conditions they often faced. They were pioneers as well as professionals. This book is a lasting tribute, of interest not only in British Columbia, but in architectural circles world-wide.

The focus of this presentation will be those architects who practiced in and around the Lower Mainland. Luxton will illustrate his talk with photographs and images of these architects' most important works, and will include rare portraits and family images coming

from private collections.

The book will be available for purchase at the talk at a special price, and the author will be available for signing. It's the perfect Christmas gift for anyone interested in local history, heritage and biography.

LEFT: Vancouver City Hall, Townley & Matheson, Architects, 1935-36.

RIGHT: Second Hotel Vancouver, Francis Swales, Architect, 1913-1915.



Donald Luxton is the award winning author of two books. He co-authored Lions Gate in 2000, a history of Vancouver's landmark Lions Gate Bridge. His second award-winning book, Building the West: The Early Architects of British Columbia, was launched in May of this year. Luxton's reputation as a heritage consultant, educator and preservation advocate has been firmly established on projects throughout British Columbia, the Yukon and Alberta. His interest in the preservation of architecture has led to his involvement with a number of heritage societies, including his role as a Director of Heritage Vancouver, as founding and current President of the Canadian Art Deco Society and as a Director of the Vancouver Heritage Conservation Foundation.

Thursday, November 27, 2003, at 7:30 pm
Upper Joyce Whalley Learning Centre, Vancouver Museum

Preznotes

Further to last month's discussion of our new VHS Research and Publication Fund, I'm pleased to report that our hard working Executive has now hammered out 'working guidelines' for use of the fund. Below is a summary of our work.

Purposes - Grants from the Fund will be considered for projects having one or more of the following purposes:

1. Original research into aspects of Greater Vancouver history, intended for publication.
2. Creation or compilation of historical materials of special interest and usefulness to students and their instructors.
3. Print publication and distribution of historical work not otherwise available to the public.
4. Online publication of historical material on a web site or other digital database not previously available online.
5. Exhibitions, lectures, seminars or similar events bringing wider knowledge of local history to the public.

Procedures - Proposals for funding will be considered twice a year, with submission deadlines of April 1st and October 1st. (This year only, the deadline will be December 31st.) Proposals will be evaluated by the VHS Executive with input from others as needed. Each grant will be subject to a written agreement between the VHS and the project group.

This all sounds terribly formal, considering that we're not talking about piles of money! Beyond a one-time carryover from the Vancouver Bibliography project, the Fund's annual income (from our Vancouver Foundation endowment) will be about \$3,000. In the grant-making world, that's peanuts! But that's just the point. In the world of local history, even peanuts can be significant — and we're determined to use these precious dollars as prudently and effectively as possible.

We'll keep you posted as funding decisions are made by the Executive. Meanwhile, help us spread the word about our grants and encourage any interested individual or group to apply. This year's deadline is December 31st.

Paul Flucke, President
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Thanks and Heads Up!

Thank you! to the four VHS members who have made contributions totaling \$225 since last month's newsletter, including a \$50 gift to our new Research and Publication Fund. Now is the time to make gifts creditable on your 2003 taxes!

Heads Up! At the end of this month we must confirm memberships for the December issue of BC Historical News. If your renewal month is November or earlier, we need your renewal by November 27 to keep your BCHN subscription intact. Thanks!

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

New Membership Campaign

Share your obsession for history with a loved one: give the gift of time, a one year's membership in the Vancouver Historical Society

Instead of socks or a tie this year give your friend, son, brother-in-law, nephew, aunt or secret pal a one-year membership in the Vancouver Historical Society. Each of us probably has at least one person on our gift list who would appreciate the gift of time, a look back at the history of our city.

They'll be amazed at how many others of us are turned on by the history of Vancouver and our neighbourhoods. If they are story-tellers, they will get a chance to share their memories and experiences; if they prefer quieter participation, they can enjoy listening to the stories of others.

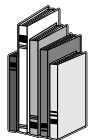
A membership in the Vancouver Historical Society is appropriate for any occasion: Christmas, graduation, retirement, and birthdays. Benefits of membership include: a monthly newsletter, a monthly speaker and a quarterly academic journal "British Columbia Historical News," which captures BC's history through stories, book reviews, and scholarly articles. All help broaden our understanding of the city we call home and the province in which we live.

We welcome the wisdom and perspective of younger members of our community. They help engage us in the discussions of the future; we can illustrate the lessons of history that may help in their challenges ahead. We are offering a special price for new gift memberships: Individuals and families: \$25 instead of the usual \$30: seniors (60 and over) and students — \$20 instead of the usual \$25.

Interested? Fill in the form attached and send it along with a cheque to: Elizabeth Hawkins at 3626 West 1st Ave., Vancouver V6R 1H2.

Any questions? Call Elizabeth Hawkins, our Membership Chairperson, at 604-737-8045 or e-mail her at: ehawkins@direct.ca.

City of Vancouver Book Awards



The City of Vancouver Book Award in its 15th Year recognizes books for their excellence and for their contribution to an understanding of Vancouver's history, its unique character, and the achievements of its residents. This year two books tied for first place::

- *Heroines*. Photographs by Lincoln Clarkes, Essays by Ken Dietrich-Campbell, Patricia Canning and Elaine Allan. Anvil Press.

- Stan Douglas *Every Building on 100 West Hastings*. Edited by Reid Shier. Arsenal Pulp Press and Vancouver's Contemporary Art Gallery.

The runners up were *Vancouver, City on the Edge*, by John Clague and Bob Turner and *Intimate Distances*. by Fiona Tinwei Lam.

Swedish Lutheran Centennial

October 4-5th, the Augustana Lutheran Church celebrated 100 years since its founding as First Swedish Evangelical Church in Vancouver in 1903. The Centennial Worship Service in both Swedish and English was based on the Roman Catholic Mass which had been preserved in some form by the Swedish Church. The liturgy and hymns reflected its Germanic origins and honoured as well the traditions of early Swedish immigrants to Canada. Guest preacher was the Rev. Dr. Donald Sjoberg, former National Bishop.

In 1910, the Swedish Lutherans built their first church in Vancouver. Located at Princess and Pender, it had stained glass windows, oak pews made in Sweden, and could seat over 600 people. They rebuilt it in 1912 after a devastating fire. In the 1930's they began to conduct services in English instead of Swedish. But these were difficult times, the Church had to sell its property and held its last service at Princess and Pender on April 30, 1944. Led by the indomitable Rev. Oscar Olson, they built a new church at 5 West King Edward and moved in in 1947. They changed their name to "Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church" and opened their doors to the larger community.

Their present Pastor is the Rev. Clifford Reinhardt, to whom I am indebted for some of this information. He explains further, " 'Augustana' is Latin for the Augsburg Confession, the first confessional document of the Lutheran Church." *Irene Howard*

FRANCES WOODWARD

UBC Map Librarian Retiring

VHS member Frances Woodward is retiring December 10th, 2003 after 37 years as Map Librarian in the Rare Books and Special Collections Division of the UBC library. Frances' knowledge of and passion for the value of Fire Insurance Maps (FIMs) as well as other historical maps has guided many local historical research projects.

Woodward looked after the map collection in the Provincial Archives of BC for five years before becoming the reference librarian in charge of the historical map collection at UBC Library Special Collections. Since then she has seen many changes, including the growth of the University Archives.

Donna Jean MacKinnon, VHS Past President, interviewed Frances Woodward in November 2003.

DJM: How and why did you become interested in FIMs?

FW: I first encountered fire insurance plans when I was working in the Provincial Archives and a real estate or insurance agent deposited a couple of large heavy volumes. At the time, agents generally kept these large atlases in very heavy covers, like super oversize ledgers. The detail on these plans was remarkable.

When I moved to UBC, we periodically received old fire insurance plans, mostly removed from the binders. That is when I began to see the value and learned more about them. They are heavily used for environmental assessment, but they have so much more potential. If we had had the plan of Barkerville when the government was planning its restoration, for example, how much easier it would have been! They contain so much history, geography, urban planning and architecture information.

DJM: Please explain the uses of fire insurance maps.

FW: If you do not have the original plans for a heritage house, the early fire insurance maps can provide much information about shape and size of the building, type of construction, the numbers of floors, doors, windows, etc. How many theatres were there downtown? Where was Gassy Jack's hotel located? What was the physical and social layout of a salmon cannery? Where was the original Armstrong cheese factory located?

DJM: What is the future of these and other historical maps?

FW: Map collections tend to be the unwanted stepchild in a library or archives. Many people are cartographically illiterate. Maps are often large, awkward to handle, take a lot of room, we don't understand them and we don't know what to do with them. Few archives do much with maps if they can avoid them, other than store them. If there are staff cutbacks, the map librarian or archivist is generally moved to some other area.

These days, with the growth of GIS, the map librarian is often part of a data library.

After retiring, Woodward plans to pursue projects in the field of history/geography/maps and to remain active in the Map Society of B.C.

Vancouver's Glory Years: Public Transit 1890-1915

October Speaker: Henry Ewert

Reviewed by Ellen Ramsay

On Thursday evening, October 23, Henry Ewert, prolific local historian and author of *The Story of the BC Electric Railway Co.* (1986), *Victoria's Street Car Era* (1992) and *The Perfect Little Street Car System* (2000), entertained VHS members and guests with slides and historical explanations from his most recent book, *Vancouver's Glory Years: Public Transit, 1890-1915* (Whitecap Press, 2003).

Vancouver was in the vanguard of streetcar transportation from 1890 to 1915, reaching its peak in 1912. The first street cars appeared in 1890 just four years after the city had been incorporated. State of the art at the time, Vancouver's streetcars formed part of the urban infrastructure and facilitated the rapid growth of the city. Mr. Ewert reminded us that streetcars, unlike private automobiles that followed, created gathering places for people and built communities.

The Interurban Line, also known as the Central Park Line, was the first and longest of its kind in North America. In 1891 the Interurban Line ran between Vancouver and New Westminster. Later in 1897 the Interurban became part of the BC Electric Railway Company. The BC Electric Railway Company expanded the line and in 1905 service was available from Vancouver to Steveston and from Marpole to New Westminster along the Fraser River.



The two and a half decades, 1890 - 1915, were aptly named "Vancouver's Glory Years" because of the rapid development of reliable public transportation and the doubling of Vancouver's population. The Main and Hastings intersection was the busiest, accommodating a 'grand union' with tracks running in all directions. In 1895 the line introduced double tracking down Granville Street; from Hastings to Robson; and on Davie Street. By 1904, streetcars ran through the West End to Stanley Park, down Main Street to 33rd, and to Kitsilano. The same year, at Main and Prior Streets, BC Electric opened its new car barn, the largest west of Toronto and on the Pacific Coast.

In 1910, streetcars were regulated: open cars were no longer allowed and speed was limited to 18 miles per hour. The first "Hobble skirt" line was developed in 1913 when 30 women took to the rails.

Following the formal presentation, our articulate and knowledgeable audience recounted more stories from the "glory years": settlers selling 11 tickets for 50 cents; and UBC bus tickets going for 3 cents each. What a bargain! With the introduction of the U-pass this year for all university students and the pending and controversial RAV line mega-project, moving people efficiently in our city remains uppermost in the minds of Vancouver residents.

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

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