

Vancouver Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

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Vancouver: Bridging its History 1895-1980

The Photos of Otto Landauer and Leonard Frank

October 22nd Speaker: Molly Winston

A prize won in a lottery would be the beginning of a great photographic treasure for Vancouver. Leonard Frank arrived in Vancouver in 1892, at the age of 22, looking for gold. Instead he won a camera in a lottery and embarked on a remarkable 50-year career as a photographer recording the city. Following Frank's death in 1944, Otto Landauer bought the business and took over Frank's existing clientele, an impressive array of architecture, engineering and construction companies. Landauer worked until his death in 1980.

Over 39,000 photographs in the Leonard Frank Photos Studio collection are held by the Jewish Museum and Archives, an institution whose mandate is to collect, preserve and make available for research the history of the Jewish people of British Columbia. Both Otto Landauer and his predecessor Leonard Frank were of German Jewish origin.

One of the most significant series of photographs in this collection was born out of tragedy. On June 17, 1958, while Landauer was photographing the north end of the Second Narrows Bridge — which was still under construction — falsework supports gave way, causing the bridge to collapse.

The accompanying photo shows the Second Narrows Bridge, with tugboats and rescue teams surrounding the wreckage just 15 minutes after the collapse. Landauer, having impaired hearing, did not hear the initial crash, but he was immediately signalled by his assistant, Kelly Duncan, and arrived first on the scene.

Drawing on the photographs of Leonard Frank and Otto Landauer, Molly Winston, Education Coordinator for the Jewish Museum and Archives of British Columbia, will take us on a photographic journey through Vancouver's era of bridge construction.

Since moving to Vancouver and joining the Jewish Museum and Archives in September 2008, Molly has been educating audiences on Jewish history in British Columbia through a variety of walking tours,

exhibits, and school programs. Prior to moving to Vancouver, Molly served as adjunct faculty at the University of Pennsylvania Department of Fine Arts and as exhibitions assistant for the Van Pelt-Dietrich Rare Books and



Tugs and small crafts gather 15 minutes after the collapse of the Second Narrows Bridge, Vancouver, BC. June 17, 1958. *Photographer: Otto F. Landauer; Source: Barbara Laudauer, Jewish Museum & Archives of BC; LF.01090*

Manuscript Library at the University of Pennsylvania. Ms. Winston has a Master of Fine Arts Degree from the University of Pennsylvania and a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from the Maryland Institute College of Art. Both a Canadian and US citizen, she originally hails from Baltimore, Maryland.

Scott Anderson

Next Meeting: Thursday, October 22, 7:30 pm at the Museum of Vancouver

Preznotes

The Olympics (both regular and Para-Olympics) has got the better of us for February 2010. On the advice of the Museum of Vancouver, and other similar organizations, we have decided to cancel our February speaker's event. We have found that public events in cities during other Olympics have also shut down mainly because people have been focused on the Games and the cities are usually in gridlock. These days, with heightened security concerns, we are expecting that the city will almost grind to a halt. This would have presented a real problem for people trying to get to our February event. Other events in January, March and so forth will go on as planned.

The city can probably afford to turn the city over to a major sports event. I was told a few months ago — although I have not been able to verify it — that Vancouver spends far more on the Arts than it does on Sports, which is opposite to what other cities of our size do. Vancouverites are quite satisfied to take our entertainment from the beauty of the city and its environs.

During the month of February, Vancouver will be on display for the world to see, warts and all. It is rather ironic that a city that for the past several decades has allowed itself to be passed off as any other city for the film industry will now be forced to speak with its own voice. Some time ago, we offered our services to VANOC but heard nothing back. However, should any of the worldwide media be willing to find out about the history of the city, we are ready for them.

As I mentioned last month, we are still on the hunt for a treasurer after May 2010. If any of you are at all interested, please get in touch.

Bruce M. Watson, VHS President

More about the Braid Tuck Co.

In last month's newsletter, a reader asked about the Braid Tuck Co. We now have more information thanks to Andrew Martin of the Vancouver Public Library and VHS member Peter Watson who both took the time to pore over the city directories.

The first mention of William Braid was in the 1894 *Vancouver City Directory*. He was living at the Hotel Vancouver at that time, no occupation listed. Over the years, the directories showed the following information:

- **1896:** Braid, Kelly & Co. (wholesale grocers at 601-603 Granville).
- **1901:** William Braid & Co (grocers at 603 Granville).
- **1906:** William Braid & Co. (wholesale grocers at 20 W. Hastings).
- **1911:** William Braid & Co. (teas, coffees & spices at 1084 Homer) They were still at this address in 1924 according to the directory.
- **1925, December 31:** Braid Tuck Co. Ltd. incorporated (Peter sent a copy of the incorporation notice from the *British Columbia Gazette*).
- **1926:** first listing of Braid, Tuck & Co (tea blenders & coffee roasters at 1070 Hamilton). M.A. Tuck listed as Pres. (this was probably Montague Arthur Tuck who died in 1946).
- **1938:** last listing of Braid, Tuck & Co. at 1070 Hamilton.
- **1955:** last listing of Braid's Ltd. (wholesale tea at 1070 Hamilton).

Andrew writes: "I am not certain who William Braid was. There is a person by that name (William Goldsworth Braid) listed in the BC Archives Vital Events Index (deaths). The one they list died in 1924. His residence was at the Hotel Vancouver. His last occupation is listed as a retired wholesale merchant (1914-1924). He is listed as living in BC for 33 years (since 1895). This could be the guy."

Unique Walking Tour of Historic Hotel Vancouver

The Fairmont Hotel Vancouver is pleased to host the Vancouver Historical Society for a walking tour of the hotel on **Sunday, November 22, 2009, at 11:00 AM.**

The group will meet by the concierge desk in the main lobby of the hotel. Due to space restrictions, the

size of the group will be **limited to 15 individuals.** Members are asked to call the **VHS Info-Line (604-878-9140)** before November 1 to register. If there is overwhelming interest, names will be drawn at random to finalize the group (to be fair to all members, as some may not get the newsletter as quickly as others).

Early City Photos Digitized

The Dominion Photograph Company was founded in 1914/15 by John Fawcett and Percy Bentley. Described as one of the most important photographic firms in Vancouver, they specialized in commercial/industrial photography and portraiture. The Vancouver Public Library's collection of Dominion Photograph Company photos presents an illuminating view of Vancouver from the early 1910s to the 1960s.

The earliest photographs (1914-1926) produced by the company were made on glass plates. Glass plate photographic negatives require special handling and storage. Although many of the glass negatives in the Vancouver Public Library collection are in remarkably good condition despite their age and fragility, best archival practices suggest that they should be put in deep storage as a means of preserving them for future generations. Digitizing the plates provides worldwide access to the scanned images, enabling the library to make high-quality reproductions on demand while at the same time allowing the library to package the plates for long-term deep storage in an optimum environment.

In 2008 the Vancouver Historical Society donated \$6,050 to the Vancouver Public Library Special Collections Department to digitize 350 glass plate negatives from the Dominion Photograph Company collection. This project has now been completed. If you would like to see some of these scanned photographs check the VPL Historical Photographs database at:

<http://www3.vpl.vancouver.bc.ca/spe/histphotos/>

- Click on "Advanced Search" at the bottom of this page.
- In the "Collection" box select "Dominion Photograph Company Collection."
- In the "Year" box type in "1914:1926."
- Click "Search Now" and prepare to see some very interesting photographs of early Vancouver.

The Vancouver Public Library Special Collections Department has now on display some of the photographs from the Dominion Photograph Company Glass Negative Collection.

Andrew Martin

Upcoming Speakers & Events

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 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, November 26, 2009

Stories from Vancouver's Favourite Bandleader *Speaker: Dal Richards*

Now 91-years-old, Dal continues to perform with his band — something he's been doing for most of his life. As can be expected, Dal has a collection of wonderful stories, which he will be sharing with us. The VHS' own Chuck Davis will moderate the evening's talk.

Thursday, January 28, 2010

History of Public Health in Vancouver *Speaker: Dr. John Blatherwick*

From the pandemic of 1918 to the "bird" flu of a few years ago — Vancouver's former Chief Medical Officer delves into how the city's public health services have developed to protect residents and visitors.

Thursday, February 25, 2010

Talk and Meeting Cancelled Due to 2010 Winter Games

Thursday, March 25, 2010

Chinatown: Personal Memories

Speaker: Larry Wong

We'll discover Chinatown through the memories of Larry Wong who grew up in the neighbourhood. Larry's father, a tailor, emigrated from China in 1911 and eventually opened a business on Main Street. Larry's mother joined his father in 1921 and they raised a family of four.

Thursday, April 22, 2010

Granville Street's Jewel, the Orpheum Theatre *Speaker: Chuck Davis*

The spotlight shines on the theatre that was Canada's largest vaudeville house when it opened in 1927. Hear the story of the building, the builders, the performers, and much more.

Saving the Pennsylvania Hotel

Last Month's Speakers: Tom LaViolette and Mitch Sakumoto

Two men who had a dream to restore a decrepit Downtown Eastside hotel to its original architectural beauty spoke to a combined meeting of the VHS and Heritage Vancouver on September 24th.

Introducing Tom LaViolette of the Portland Society and Mitch Sakumoto of Merrick Architecture, Donald Luxton referred to a project done "under extremely difficult circumstances." Tom and Mitch allowed as to how we were indeed about to hear a "challenging story." To us in the audience, the challenge seemed to be summed up in two words: finance and reconstruction. To judge by the results at 412 Carrall St., one can only conclude it was worth the effort.

Strikingly handsome with its 'San Francisco' bay windows and jaunty turret, the Pennsylvania started life in 1906 as one of young Vancouver's most prestigious hotels, but neglect and a changing neighbourhood demographic reduced it to a sad shell by the 1980s.

Tom spoke of the long years spent in trying to raise the hotel's purchase price of \$1.6 million, only to be faced with a \$3.6 million development estimate. Luckily Concord Pacific came to the rescue with some of

the required top-up funds in return for density trade-offs.

Mitch showed pictures of the hotel in its various makeover stages, that ranged from the treatment of 'living walls' (an evocative term to describe the invasion of walls

by plant life), through massive interior gutting to accommodate the installation of earthquake-resistant steel bracing, to a careful refurbishment of the impressive stone archway forming the main entrance to the hotel.

Additional reminders of the Pennsylvania's former glory remain in the faithfully reproduced floor tile designs and the in-situ display of the original elevator gear assembly.

Fortunate residents — supported clients of the Portland Society — now occupy the 250-300 square foot units, most of which have ensuite facilities. Twelve of the 44 units are designated 'enhanced accessibility.'

The Pennsylvania Hotel, resplendent with its new signage, a close copy of the original, reopened grandly in December 2008. It adds a touch of real class to an otherwise down-at-the-heels neighbourhood.

Neil McBurney



The Pennsylvania Hotel today at Carrall and Hastings

Vancouver Historical Society Leadership - 2009 - 2010 (Elected May 28, 2009)

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Director	Chuck Davis
Director (Memberships)	Elizabeth Hawkins
Director	Jean Mann
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APPOINTED POSITIONS

Webmaster	Quasar Data Management
Archivist	Elizabeth Hawkins
Info Line	Barbara Coles

CONTACT INFORMATION

Vancouver Historical Society Information Line: 604-878-9140
 Mailing Address: P.O. Box 3071 Vancouver, BC V6B 3X6
 Website: www.vancouver-historical-society.ca