



Victoria Historical Society Publication

Summer, 2007

MEETINGS

The final meeting of this season is on 24 May, 2007, when the speaker will be Arnold Ranneris and his subject, Victoria's YMCA and YWCA

Arnold is volunteer archivist for the YM/YWCA. He has become fascinated with the social history of the "Y" which has been active in Victoria since 1875 (YMCA) and 1892 (YWCA). He will be assisted by Lori Hewitt, staff member of the YM/YWCA

NOTICES

Special Raffle

A complete set of the SOUND HERITAGE series

A few years ago the VHS received a donation from a member's estate of a set of the series published by the Provincial Archives between 1974 and 1983. Since we do not maintain a library but do have a Scholarship Fund we plan to raffle the set with all proceeds going into the Fund.

The project was to collect and compile oral histories, recorded interviews and reminiscences on a wide variety of BC- related topics. The issues usually contained archival photos, maps and illustrations. ABE Books currently has individual issues offered at between \$6 and \$60. Full sets are very scarce. This set, totalling 36 issues, has a market value, we believe, of at least \$500.

Tickets, limited to 250 in total, will be \$5 each or 5 for \$20, will be sold during the Symposium and Conference and will also be available to VHS members not attending these events. The draw will take place at the banquet.

Please contact: Michael Layland or Doris Schuh for details and tickets.

A BOOK NOTE

This and That is a collection of Emily Carr's unpublished short pieces written over a period of time. Local resident Ann-Lee Switzer and her husband Gordon have done this labour of love. The collection is available at Munro's and possibly other bookstores for \$17.

Arnold Ranneris

FORTHCOMING GENERAL MEETING

Nominations for Council

Service on the VHS Council is a privilege and opportunity to get to know others and the issues the local historical scene has before it. Presently we have a need for two positions: Secretary and Publicity.

Duties are not onerous; we meet 4 times a year as an Executive over and above regular meetings. If you have an interest, please contact chair of Nominations Committee Arnold Ranneris (598-3035)

MEMBERSHIP FEES

I have received memberships dues and contacted those still outstanding up to the end of March. Several people have already paid their fees which would normally fall due in April and May. If there are some remaining people who wish to renew membership please phone me, Eric Domke, at 389-1418 and I will advise you on the amount from your due date until September, 2007 or, if you wish, September, 2008 (most people are choosing the latter). Reminder: In September of this year all memberships are due with the exception of those who have paid until September, 2008.

HALLMARK SOCIETY

Tuesday, May 1st: The Hallmark Society honours outstanding achievement in the field of heritage preservation, conservation, restoration and advocacy at its Annual Awards Night. The evening will include a slide show of award winning projects, the presentation of awards and the presentation of heritage designation plaques by local municipalities. The event will be held at St. Ann's Academy Auditorium, 835 Humboldt Street at 7:30pm. Cost is \$10 per person. Tickets may be purchased by contacting the Hallmark office at 382-4755.

REFRESHMENTS

As you all know, the folks who organise the refreshments at our meetings give freely of their time and talents to provide us with tea and cookies. They rely on your goodwill to provide the wherewithal to sustain the inner man or woman as the case may be. Therefore your contributions of cookies, cakes etc are necessary for the continuing successful operation of this service. Please contact June Domke to arrange an appropriate date for your contribution. Sign-up sheets are generally available at the refreshment table



SHIPS AND STREETS

Sutlej street in the Cook Street village was named for HMS *Sutlej* a warship stationed at Esquimalt in the 1860's. The vessel was named after an Indian river, a tributary to the Indus which it joins at Mithaakot, south of Multan. It was on the banks of the *Sutlej* that two desperate battles were fought during the Sikh War in 1846.

Her construction, as a sailing vessel began in 1847 in Pembroke Dockyard, and she was launched in 1855 and taken to Portsmouth where she had her bottom coppered. She remained there, inoperative, for four years and then work began to convert her to a steamship. She was cut in half and a new centre section was inserted, increasing her length from 180 feet to 254 feet. Here she was fitted with two steam engines. The work was completed in 1860.

She left Portsmouth on 12 December, 1862 bound for Esquimalt as flagship of Admiral Kingcome, Commander in Chief of the Pacific Station, under the command of Captain Matthew Connolly, arriving here on 13 June, 1863.

During this era the always conservative Admiralty remained distrustful of the 'new fangled' steam propulsion, so the *Sutlej* remained as a steam-powered sailing vessel or perhaps a

sail-powered steamer, depending on circumstances. To aid the sailing qualities of the vessel she was fitted with a screw propeller which could be drawn up into the hull to reduce resistance when the ship was in sailing mode. She carried a total of 35 guns in four different sizes. There was a complement of 515 officers and men, with 76 Marines borne additional for garrison duties on San Juan Island, and a few officers for surveying duties.

In April, 1864, Vice-Admiral Joseph Denman relieved Adm. Kingcome as C-in-C and Captain Connolly was replaced by Captain Goode.

In June, 1864, *Sutlej* was sent to Bentinck to investigate the so-called massacre by local inhabitants of several members of a work crew constructing a trail from Bute Inlet to the mouth of the Quesnel River. Sailors and marines were landed at what was then known as New Aberdeen and pursued the miscreants some 450 kilometres into the interior, and eventually, with the aid of a senior native chief in the area, succeeded in apprehending several of the supposed culprits. They were later tried at Quesnel and five of them were found guilty and sentenced to be hanged.

In October of 1864 *Sutlej* was despatched to Clayoquot Sound to deal with some problems caused by the murder of the crew of the Kingfisher by the local inhabitants.

By early 1866 *Sutlej* was at Valparaiso on patrol, and in June of that year returned to Vancouver Island, arriving early in June. Her commission here ended a few days later and she left for U.K. only to meet with a severe storm which blew for several days and which occasioned a visit to San Francisco to refit, the ship having been damaged and losing her ship's boats.

Sutlej lost several of her crew here to desertions. For diplomatic reasons, once the deserters had made it ashore, they were immune from recapture by the British. In his diary, Sub-Lieutenant Charles Beresford writes:

We put into San Francisco to refit. Here many of our men deserted. In those days it was impossible to prevent desertions on these coasts, although the sentries on board had their rifles loaded with ball cartridges. Once the men had landed we could not touch them. I used to meet the deserters on shore and they used to chaff me. As we had lost our boats, the American dockyard supplied us with some. One day the officer of the watch noticed fourteen men getting into the

cutter which was lying at the boom. The officer of the watch instantly called away the whaler, the only other boat available, intending to send a party in pursuit. But the deserters had foreseen that contingency, and had cut the falls just inside the lowering cleat, so that the whaler could not be lowered.

Continuing her journey back to Britain, she arrived at Spithead on the 7 June, 1867 where at the time was being held a review of the fleet in honour of the Sultan of Turkey. *Suttlej* created something of a stir when, under full sail, she passed through the lines of assembled warships, occasioning cheers from their crews.

She was broken up at Portsmouth in 1869, having had an active life of only seven years.



PASS THE JACK O'HEARTS

A History of Brewing in Victoria

Victoria has the distinction of being the home of the first commercial brewery in Western Canada.

In 1858, William Steinberger, a native of Cologne, Germany, established the Victoria Brewery on the eastern shore of Swan Lake. In 1859, a year later, he relocated his enterprise to the corner of Discovery and Government Streets. By the end of the nineteenth century, after changing hands a number of times and being re-named the Victoria-Phoenix Brewing Co. Ltd, it had become one of the most highly regarded and efficient breweries on the entire Pacific Coast.

This is but one example of the rich legacy of breweries that have operated in Victoria over the past 147 years. While both Nanaimo and Cumberland have also boasted breweries of note, Victoria was the dominant brewing centre on Vancouver Island with at least nineteen brewing facilities operating at one time or another between 1858 and the advent of provincial prohibition in 1917. It is also worth noting that before the ascendancy of the industry in Vancouver in 1898, our city was the major brewing centre in British Columbia itself.

The names of many of our city's early breweries are still recognized today; the Silver Spring Brewery, Bavaria Brewery, Phoenix Brewery, Fairall Brothers Brewery and the Lion Brewery which was located near Spring Ridge; others, such as the Pacific Brewery, Tiger Brewery, James Bay Brewery, E & N

Brewery and the Half-way House Brewery, are less easily recognized but no less worthy of our attention.

Historically, the breweries produced an impressive range of styles. Some of the brands they produced were still part of people's daily lives within recent memory — Silver Spring Lager Beer, Old English Stout, Phoenix Export Lager, Gold Keg and Tate's English Ale. Others, produced in an earlier time, have largely receded from memory. These brands included Excelsior Export Lager, XXX Colonial Ale, Invalid Stout, Ye Olde XXXX Ale, Maple Leaf Lager, Silver Spray, Perfection (simply but emphatically stated) and Jack O'Hearts Pale Export Beer. The latter, produced by the Victoria-Phoenix Brewing Co. Ltd, featured a Jack of Hearts playing card glued to the bottle - a novel form of advertising to say the least. Colourful labels and product names were augmented by claims from some brewers that not only were their products were "healthful, refreshing and invigorating" but that they also contained "backbone," a promise that conjures up some interesting images.

The city's breweries, whether operated by single proprietors, partnerships or later by larger, limited joint stock companies, all shared one thing in common — a pride in the quality of their beer. This was important in a market that sought a consistent product and where, true to the times, beer was seen as a staple of daily living. Also of note is the fact that such high standards were often recognized elsewhere. This was the case in 1886, when brothers Thomas and Robert Carter, who operated the Vancouver Ale, Porter and Steam Beer Brewery in the 500 block of Herald Street, received "medals for the display and superior quality of their ale and porter from the Paris Exposition, the Colonial and Indian Exposition and the British Columbia Agricultural Association; the one received from the Paris Exposition being a handsome one of solid gold." This success, plus entrepreneurship, may well have played a role in the export of locally produced beers to such places as California, the Yukon, Mexico and in later years as far a field as Hong Kong, Shanghai, Japan, Borneo and the Dutch East Indies.

The question is often asked "who were the people behind the early industry?" Many nationalities were represented and a quick roll call finds brewers from the United States, England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Germany, Switzerland, Austria and Denmark. Some were already experienced and formally trained as brewmasters or had owned breweries when they arrived on our shores. Others learned the profession on the job. While males dominated, Victoria most likely has the distinction of having the first female brewery proprietor in

Western Canada. Alvina Peters, widow of Peter Henning Peters, took over the operation of the Empire Brewery at Spring Ridge, shortly after the death of her husband in 1886.

Our brewing pioneer William Steinberger, would quickly find himself in company with a number of other noteworthy brewers. In 1859, Arthur Bunster, an Irishman from County Tipperary, established the city's second brewery - the Colonial. A well known figure in his day, he was not only a politician, farmer, speculator and liquor wholesaler but also a true champion of the local brewing industry. Charles Gowen, originally from London, England, had led an adventurous life. As a young man he sailed on clipper ships and had nearly drowned in a shipwreck in 1845. After that he gave up the sea and became a prospector, cattleman and hotel owner in California in the 1850s. After arriving in Victoria in 1858 and spending some years in the Cariboo, he used his savings to establish the Phoenix Brewery in 1868.

Brewing was also often a family affair. Names such as Fairall, Tate, Hasenfratz are symbolic of inter-generational proponents of the brewer's art in our city. Others have almost a rags-to-riches flavour. Harry Maynard, a native of Cornwall, England, arrived in Victoria in 1884 and after a stint with the E & N Railroad Company, he went to work as a delivery man for the Victoria-Phoenix Brewing Co. Ltd. In 1908, he and a group of associates took the Silver Spring Brewery Ltd. to new heights and he eventually became a major force in the provincial brewing industry.

And of course, the city produced one of Western Canada's most noteworthy partnerships, that of Joseph Loewen and Ludwig Emil Erb, who purchased the Victoria Brewery in 1870. Loewen, a first-class businessman and strategist, and Erb, a formally, trained brewer of great reputation, successfully guided the brewery to being one of the province's largest operations.

In physical terms, breweries underwent great change in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Early breweries are often referred to as "horizontal." Usually only one or two stories in height and designed by the brewer himself, they relied heavily on pumps to move the beer from one stage of the brewing process to the other. By the late 1880's "gravity" style breweries were becoming more common throughout North America and their appearance in Victoria became inevitable. These larger edifices, often designed by specialized brewery architects, had tall, tower-style brew houses that utilized gravity as an integral part of the production flow. The style of these breweries comes most readily to mind for most people today. Some,

like the largely wooden Silver Spring Brewery Co. situated at the corner of Catherine and Esquimalt Road in Victoria-West, while efficient, were more utilitarian in appearance. Others, like the second version of the Phoenix Brewery, built in 1892 on Head Street in Esquimalt, and its major cross-town rival, the Victoria Brewing and Ice Co., were constructed of brick and stone and exuded a sense of confidence and strength.

As is often the case, advancements in technology also affected design and construction techniques dramatically, particularly from the 1880's onwards. The introduction of pasteurization (which dramatically increased beer's shelf-life), automated bottling lines, artificial refrigeration, electricity and later, mechanized delivery vehicles, all played a part in affecting brewery design. When taken collectively these modern improvements served to support the greater production and storage capacity required to meet the needs of an ever-expanding population and to reach beyond traditionally localized markets. To truly take advantage of the growing, newly realized market potential, a number of local brewers moved away from the old business model of sole or dual proprietorships into limited joint stock companies. By offering stock options, local brewers could access both the new capital required to build new and modern breweries while also attracting the diverse business acumen required to be competitive in a new and increasingly complex business world.

Winds of change of another kind, however, were now blowing. The prohibition cause in North America had gained significant strength in the years leading up to the First World War and brewers found themselves charged with allegations ranging from the adulteration of beer to the brutalization of the human spirit. Efforts to portray beer as a moderate, family drink did little to forestall the inevitable. While this complex subject deserves an article unto itself, suffice it to say that the combination of provincial prohibition legislation combined with the later and more harmful federal version, spelled the demise of many local breweries. With the steady reduction in legal markets for full-strength beer, the unpopularity of the government sanctioned "near beer" and the resulting closure of a multitude of saloons, many breweries found themselves in trouble.

Some survived to see the repeal of the prohibition laws in 1921 and subsequently, the sale of full-strength beer by the glass in the new era of the "beer parlour". By and large, the survivors were those breweries that had diversified into other but related business activities such as the production of soft drinks or commercial ice-making, given that the latter was already a by-product of artificial refrigeration.

Another wind of change however was already blowing — consolidation. In 1928, as part of a nation-wide trend, the Victoria-Phoenix Brewing Co. and the Silver Spring Brewery Ltd. became part of Coast Breweries Ltd. This was a company formed by Robert Fiddes and Associates to hold the assets of these and two other breweries, the Westminster Brewery Ltd. and the Rainer Brewing Company of Canada, located in Kamloops. In 1954, Coast Breweries Ltd. became Lucky Lager Breweries which in turn was purchased by John Labatt Limited in 1958. They continued to operate the facility under the Lucky Lager banner until 1967 when the brewery began operating as part of Labatt Breweries of B.C. Ltd.

In 1974, Labatt's initiated a major heritage renovation of the building. The eight month project, which won an award from the Hallmark Society, included sandblasting the original brickwork, the removal of the brewery's familiar rotating roof sign and the construction of a steep hip roof of copper sheathing. A year later, the facility's original iron gates were re-hung on the main entrance. However, in the fall of 1981 Labatt's ceased operations in Victoria. The following year, despite the efforts of the City's Heritage Advisory Committee to save large elements of the brewery, it was demolished when the motion to approve a heritage designation bylaw failed to pass Council. With the bylaw's defeat, a direct, physical link to our brewing heritage was lost. Today, only the original brick engine room of the Silver Spring Brewery, which still stands at the corner of Esquimalt and Catherine Streets, remains to remind us of our brewing past, the rest of the brewery was demolished in 1961 after a number of years of inactivity.

Not all would be lost, however. In the early 1980s a worthy successor to William Steinberger materialized in Horseshoe Bay on the Mainland. John Mitchell, one of the owners of Troller's Pub, applied to the Liquor Control Board to build a separate cottage brewery to produce local, naturally brewed ale for his customers. Approval was granted and by 1982 the products of the Horseshoe Bay Brewery were available and the brewing revolution was underway in Canada. Soon after, the revolution spread to Vancouver Island and once again Victoria took the lead.

In May 1984, John teamed up with a Victoria native and architect, Paul Hadfield to open Spinnakers, which has the distinction of being Canada's first and now the country's oldest in-house brewpub. When reflecting upon that time, Paul comments, "It really was an exciting time as it was very much a pioneering experience. Back then, you could have counted up all of what we now call craft breweries in

North America on two hands." From the outset he and John decided to build a new facility from the ground up that would bring a wide array of styles to local consumers. "I remember John commenting that the market in those days was dominated by predictable, fizzy lagers. We've come a long way since then. Today we have over 2000 craft breweries in North America, making our part of the world one of the richest places for the beer aficionado."

Other breweries were soon to follow. Vancouver Island Brewery Ltd., (originally called Island Pacific Brewery) began full production in 1985 and was followed four years later by Swan's Brew Pub. The 1990s saw the emergence of the Canoe Brew Pub, Lighthouse Brewing Co., Hugo's Brewhouse and the Gulf Islands Brewery on Salt Spring Island. Four years ago our city welcomed the newest brewery on the local scene, Phillips Brewing. Proprietor Matt Phillips, who also co-chairs the Craft Brewers Association of British Columbia, first became interested in craft brewing shortly after coming of legal drinking age. "I was blown away by how different the craft brewed beers were," he remarks. "I was impressed with the variety and their big, full flavours. I knew then that I wanted to become a brewer." As for the future, Matt thinks that local brewers will continue to focus on offering interesting, flavourful beers that are brewed with the finest ingredients. "This philosophy drives our local industry and goes hand in hand with a strong commitment to quality."

And judging by the results of this year's Canadian Brewing Awards competition held in Toronto, his comments are borne out. In an event that included 48 breweries and over 200 different beers, our local brewers fared very well in medal wins in what has become an important yardstick for judging the quality of Canadian beer. And so the tradition of brewing award winning beers continues in our city and in a very tangible way provides the link to our rich and pioneering brewing past.

Greg Evans

Greg Evans is the Executive Director of the Maritime Museum of BC. He is also a brewing historian who has given many presentations around Western Canada, published articles, been interviewed on television and radio, and is an active member of CAMRA. This article is an excerpt from a book he is currently writing about the history of brewing in British Columbia. It was originally printed in *Platinum* magazine.

